

NOLICHUCKY JACK



FIRST ONE, THEN THE OTHER HAD THE ADVANTAGE

Page 204

NOLICHUCKY JACK

BY
JOHN T. FARIS

FRONTISPIECE BY
D. CAMMEROTA



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INTRODUCTION

“NOLICHUCKY JACK is coming!”

An excited man rushed into the little log church in the Tennessee Mountains, and aroused the people by his exclamation. U. S. 532354

Instantly all was confusion. The minister interrupted his service, and, with those who had been listening to him, rushed to the highway. One of them was a boy who never forgot the incident; when he was an old man he told how they found the roadside lined with men and women, who had gathered from far and near in response to the message which spread with a rapidity that would not be strange in these days of the telephone and the radio.

But how did the news travel so quickly in those primitive times? How could the word be given to so many people, scattered over scores of square leagues of forest wilderness, that their idol was near them?

And when “Nolichucky Jack,” John Sevier, came toiling up the road, mounted on the glorious horse which was his inseparable companion, what thundering cheers there were! How the men and women, the boys and the girls rushed out for a look, a smile, a kindly word, or a nod of recognition! No one was disappointed that

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day. For all were known to Nolichucky Jack, the greatest Indian fighter of pioneer days, hero of thirty-five victorious battles with the savages, leader of a company of hardy frontiersmen at the tremendously important battle of King's Mountain, founder and Governor of the strange State of Franklin, first Governor of Tennessee, who was reelected until he told the citizens that they really must stop.

As Sevier moved slowly through the roadside throng that Sunday morning so long ago, his sturdy hands reached out right and left, as they grasped the uplifted hands of his friends.

"Hello, Sam!"

"Well, if this isn't my old pal, Nick!"

"So that's your boy, Jim? Here, young fellow, give us your paw! They call you Jim, too, do they? Nobody could ask you to be a better man than your old dad!"

His radiant smile and his hearty words were recalled long years afterward by those who had the good fortune to be in that company.

Who was the man whom the people honored that day? "The grandest figure in Tennessee history," is the reply of James Phelan, one of the few men who has told the story of the life of Nolichucky Jack. Yet he adds, "There is little doubt that outside the mountain villages of Eastern Tennessee, he is, from a popular

standpoint, as little known as if he had been one of the shepherd kings of Egypt."

And James R. Gilman says of him:

"Boone was merely a pioneer . . . but thanks to the biographers, he is to-day known half the world over. But John Sevier was more than a pioneer, more even than a statesman or a general; he was a civilizer, a great organizer, a nation-builder. . . And yet his history is still unwritten, and he is to-day almost unknown east of the Alleghanies. But it is not so beyond the mountains. There he is spoken of with love and veneration that are seldom accorded by one man to another. I know of no other man who ever held, as he did for forty-five years, the unbroken confidence and undivided affection of a whole people. Even now . . . old men speak his name with loving reverence, and young children listen with wondering delight to the story of his life, in many a stately home and many a rude cabin west of the Alleghanies."

John Sevier loved people, and nothing was too much for him to do for them. He was popular with everybody. He was both tender and courageous, and he had a genius for military leadership that enabled him to accomplish wonders. It was said of him that in himself he was worth a whole regiment of trained soldiers. He had little education, but he was able to speak in a

- 1793 Conducted Etowah Expedition against the Indians, his last military service, and only campaign for which he ever received compensation from the Government.
- 1796 First Governor of Tennessee.
- 1803-1809 Governor for three terms.
- 1815 Died in Georgia, September 23.

But what a vivid story there is for those who will go back of these dates to the story of Nolichucky Jack, Indian Fighter and leader of men! That story has its beginning with his first expedition against the Indians when he was a boy storekeeper, and it continues through nearly fifty years of fight and struggle and conquest, for which the man was always ready because, as the years passed, he attacked his problems in the victorious spirit of that boy in the Valley of Virginia.

In all important particulars, the main incidents of Nolichucky Jack's life were as they are pictured in this volume. Sometimes slight liberties are taken with the facts—as, for instance, when James Robertson was sent to school at Staunton. History tells us that "Robertson learned his letters from his devoted wife."

The letter written by Jack Sevier to his parents in Chapter I is made up entirely of extracts from George Washington's Diary which told of his surveying experiences. It is possible that some extreme literalist will say that there is no proof that the young man Washington

visited Staunton at the period indicated. Can they prove that he did not do so?

Grateful acknowledgement is made to J. G. Smith, County Clerk of Washington County, Jonesboro, Tennessee, the first Capital of the State of Franklin, for access to old records; to Judge Samuel C. Williams, of Johnson City, Tennessee, author of the history, "The Lost State of Franklin," for information concerning John Sevier; to Supervisor M. A. Mattoon and his assistant, Mr. John McNair of Asheville, North Carolina, for guidance and companionship through the wonderful Pisgah National Forest; and to Supervisor Samuel Broadbent of Bristol, Tennessee, for similar help in visiting the scenes made famous by John Sevier and his companions in and near the glorious Unaka National Forest.

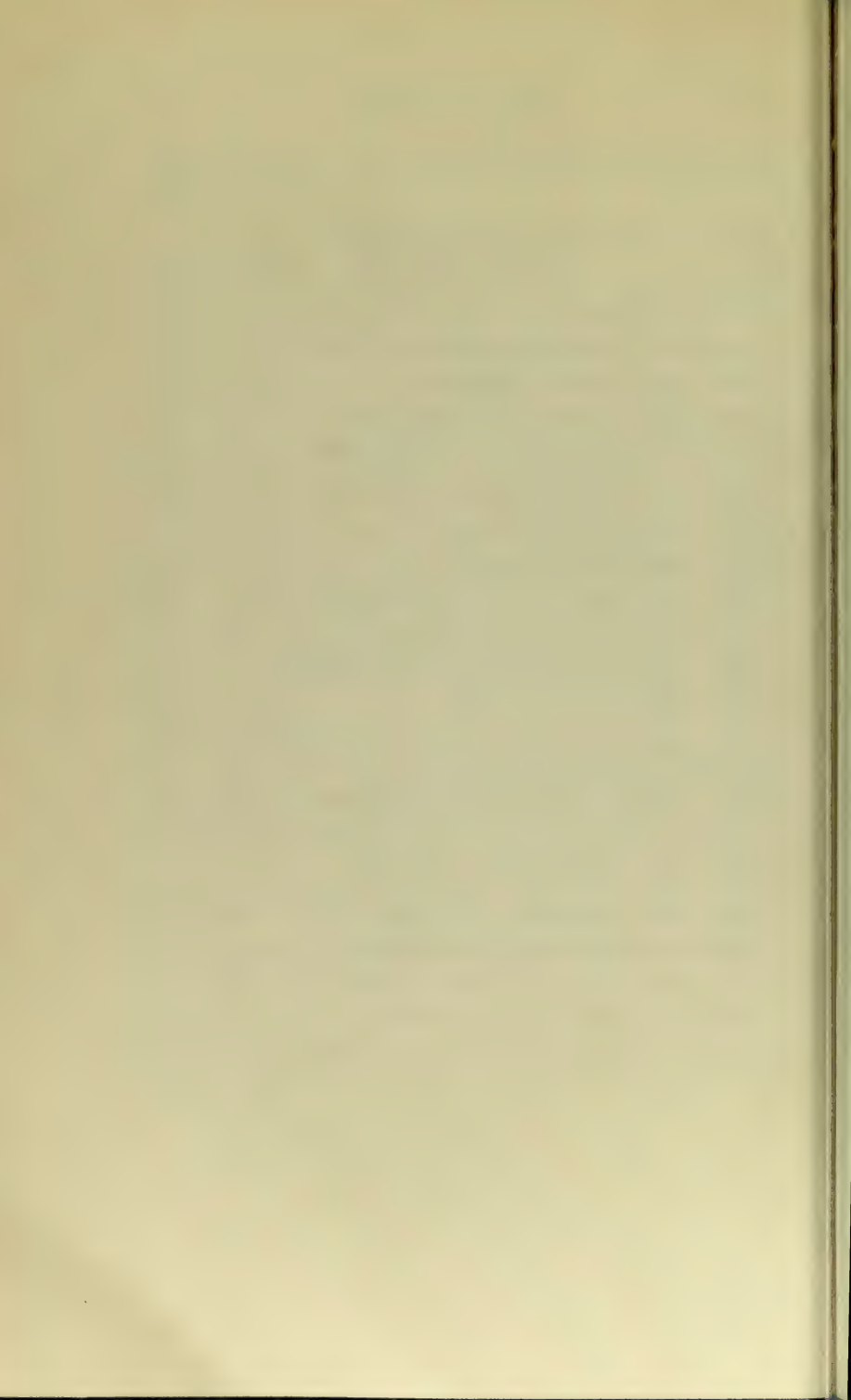
"The Rabbit and the Tar Wolf" and "How the Partridge Got His Whistle," are from the book of local history, "Historic Sullivan," by Oliver Taylor, published at Johnson City, Tennessee. "The Story of Ustutli" is by James Mooney; this appeared in the book, "Myths of the Cherokees," House Documents, vol. cxviii, Washington.

JOHN T. FARIS

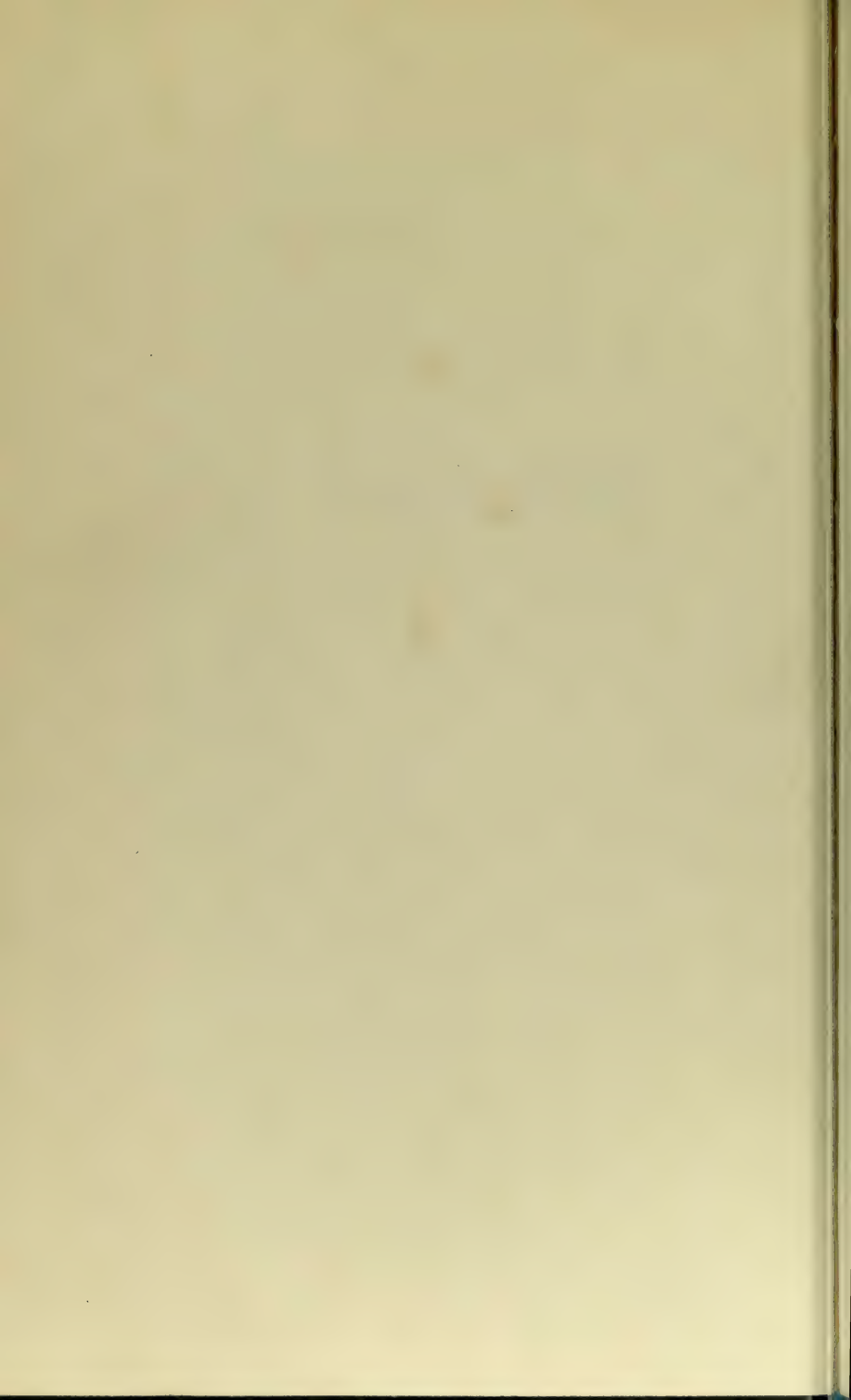
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NOLICHUCKY JACK



NOLICHUCKY JACK

CHAPTER I

A PIONEER BOY AT SCHOOL

"I WONDER what he'll be like!" said Jack Sevier.

"Will he go fishing with us?" was the query of his younger brother Valentine.

"Or will he be so full of books that he can't have a good time or let us have fun by ourselves?"

The time was 1754. The place was Virginia, in the home of the planter and storekeeper, John Sevier. The questions were about the mysterious tutor who was coming next day to the Sevier home.

The boys knew his name; he was Arthur Dunstable, and he was a recent graduate of William and Mary College. Of course their father and mother had been told a little more of him, but they, too, were anxious, though they took pains not to let the boys know of their concern. If they had allowed their thoughts to find expression, their questions would have been even more anxious than those of John and Valentine.

"I don't like the idea of having the boys taught by anybody but myself," Mrs. Sevier had said. But she knew that she could not continue to guide them.

Jack, thinking of the pleasant hours he had spent with her while she read to him from "Robinson Crusoe" or "Pilgrim's Progress," and even made Fox's "Book of Martyrs" attractive, pleased her by saying that he knew he would never have so good a time with the tutor as she had given him. "You even made me like 'Dilworth's Spelling Book,'" he told her.

But, like a real boy, he forgot all about what he would lose in the thought that the coming of the tutor was an adventure that would bring to the Sevier home something strange, probably something desirable.

"And don't forget how pleasant it will be for you to have Sam Davis and Moses Carter and Will Morris here in the house!" Mr. Sevier reminded his oldest son. "You'll have playmates to spare, won't you, Jack?"

Arthur Dunstable, the new tutor, was coming in accordance with an arrangement so often made by the planters of Rockingham County, Virginia. Few families could afford a tutor all their own, so neighbors were ready to join with them in engaging the man. In this case the tutor was to be in the Sevier home, but the Davises, the Carters, and the Morrises were to share in the expense, and their boys were to board with the Seviers.

"But you boys must not get the notion that all this is merely to give you a good time," Mr. Sevier reminded Jack and Valentine, with a smile that showed

them he wanted them to enjoy themselves, after all. They understood their father.

“Don't forget that it isn't the easiest thing to pay the tutor, boys,” he said, more seriously. “But I believe you will make him earn his twenty pounds a year, to say nothing of two of my best cows and four of my finest hogs which I have promised to give him if he stays until the end of the year!”

But the tutor did not have the privilege of choosing his cows or his hogs. For he did not stay until the end of the year. He did his work well, for he knew how to teach, and he could make the boys like being taught. He was a good fellow, and he enjoyed a morning's fishing expedition, or a walking trip up along the creeks that help to make the Shenandoah River.

A stop was put to his teaching and to the fun of the Sevier boys and their friends because of a message brought to the Sevier homestead by a neighbor who dashed up one evening just as supper was over, and paused long enough to shout:

“The Indians are coming! Run for your lives!”

Then he hurried on to warn others.

Nobody who heard his message that evening waited to ask questions or to wonder what was to be done. Hastily they gathered up a few clothes and a store of food, then were on their way to the Davis home, six

miles away, a sort of fort where they could take refuge from the Indians.

This house that was a fort was built over a fine spring. Thus, in time of siege, there could be no danger of running out of water.

Family after family rushed into the fort. To the boys and girls the experience was a lark. What did they care that they were crowded together until there was little chance to move about? Nobody thought of telling them to go to bed; they could talk and could listen to their parents discussing the possibilities of resisting the Indians' expected attack until long after their usual bedtime.

After a while, Valentine paused in his play long enough to peep out of one of the loopholes into the moonlight night.

"I see an Indian!" he called.

Then others hurried to the openings in the wall, just in time to see not merely one savage, but a dozen, thirty, forty, fifty steal from the sheltering trees. A rifle shot from one of the loopholes sent them scurrying back to shelter, and it was many minutes before the watchers within the fort were able to pick off an incautious redskin.

All night the vigil continued. A few shots were fired, but the Indians were slow to venture within range of the guns. When they were weary of the fruitless

waiting, they made a rush for the fortress, only to be driven back by a volley from the defenders. Then all was silence until after dawn.

All but the few guards at the port-holes had fallen asleep when Jack awoke, to find himself very thirsty. The water bucket was dry, so he went to the cellar for a drink.

He was about to stoop over the spring when he saw the heavy outer door move ever so gently. In a moment a head was thrust inside. Here was one of the Indians, almost within the house!

If Jack had given himself time to think, he probably would have done nothing. But there was no time to think. In the moment of danger many boys on the frontier learned to act instinctively. Jack did! His hand touched one of a pile of sharpened stakes which were ready for use with the pea vines. This he raised and threw toward the head of the intruder.

And the Indian fell in the doorway!

For nine-year-old Jack the task of dragging the stunned warrior into the cellar was rather heavy, but he managed. Then, waiting only to refasten the door which in some way had yielded to the Indian's touch, he hurried into the room above, told of the presence of the fallen savage, and followed down the ladder as the work he had begun so well was finished.

“Look at his head-dress!” said Jack’s father, proudly. “The boy has bagged a chief!”

Evidently the victim was more than a mere chief, for when the head-dress was thrust through one of the loopholes, an Indian grabbed it, and ran to his companions.

Followed a weird chant, and the disappearance of the rest of the Indians!

Of course everybody thought they would return. But for some unexplained reason they did not appear. Toward evening a spy ventured out of the fortress, only to return with the report that there was no sign of anybody near.

To make sure of safety, all waited where they were until next morning. Then they stole out, some to their homes, others to hunt for a refuge where the Indians would not follow.

For the Seviers, this meant a trip to Fredericksburg, far to the east on the Rappahannock River. There they remained for several years, until word came that they could return to Rockingham County with safety; the Indians had withdrawn beyond the mountains.

When the little company made the hundred-mile journey, Jack proudly led the way, mounted on his pony, Prince. The jet black animal, with one white forefoot and a white star on his forehead, was as proud as his young master.

"Yon's a fine beast!" a farmer by the roadside remarked to the rider one morning. "And I see you take good care of him."

"Why not?" Jack asked. "You see, I want to keep him fine. He'll be a great horse some day!"

The return to Rockingham was in the middle of summer. Jack and Valentine, together with their still younger brothers, Abraham and Robert, had wonderful sport during the weeks which remained before September. At first they were careful not to go too far from the home place, for fear of a possible skulking Indian, but soon they lost their caution and wandered for miles around in search of game and fish, or merely for the pleasure of seeing what was beyond the forest. Jack's dog, Rover, was a constant companion on these trips.

More than once Mr. Sevier talked of putting a stop to the vagabond life of the boys, but their mother interceded for them.

"Don't forget that this may be their last summer together. When Jack goes to Staunton he won't be able to come back often. The boy will have some real school then. And who knows what may happen afterward?"

Sharp-eared Jack was not far away. He overheard his mother's plea. At once he was all interest and enthusiasm.

"Staunton? School? When? How?" he asked,

breathlessly. "Do you mean that I am to go away this year?"

"Yes, soon," Mr. Sevier replied. "Wouldn't you like to study writing and accounts, and learn something of the most useful branches of mathematics, like geometry and trigonometry?"

Honest Jack owned that he was not enthusiastic about the mathematics, but he said he thought it would be fine to go.

So, within a few weeks, he rode Prince down to Staunton, in the next county. There a new chapter in his life began, when he was ten years old.

"You must study hard, Jack," was his mother's parting word. "It isn't easy to let you go away from home, but we are glad to manage the schooling, because you need it."

"Will it cost much?" Jack asked. He was boy enough to measure the value of anything by the amount that must be paid for it.

"Don't bother your head about that, son!" his father replied. "It will be easy to manage the thousand pounds of tobacco they ask for your board for a year, and the eight hundred and forty-five pounds more needed for your schooling and books."

With his usual twinkle, he went on:

"Don't you wish you were a girl? Then you would

not need to pay more than two hundred pounds for the schooling."

"Don't tease him, Daddy," put in Mrs. Sevier. "We wouldn't give up our Jack for any girl, would we, Jack?"

So once more Jack mounted Prince. How he wished he could take Rover with him! But this was impossible. Sternly he ordered the dog to remain at home, while he rode to the south, down through the fertile valley of Virginia. Mr. Sevier rode by his side. Sometimes the track was too narrow for both; then Jack fell behind and watched his father's broad shoulders moving up and down on his mount.

"Wouldn't you like to keep Prince with you?" Mr. Sevier asked. "I think I can arrange it so if you wish."

"O Father! Can you? That would be wonderful! If I can have Prince being away from home will not be half so hard."

"And when vacancy comes you can ride home at once," Mr. Sevier said. "Or do you think you want to come home when school is done?"

"Vacancy? What is that?" Jack asked, puzzled.

"Oh, that is what they call the weeks between two terms. You'll be ready for it, if you study as hard as you ought to study. School keeps long hours."

"What are the hours?"

“ Why, from 7 to 11 in the morning and 1 to 5 in the afternoon, between April and September, and from 8 to 11 and 1 to 4 for the rest of the year! But you’ll have a half day on Saturday all to yourself.”

When Staunton was just ahead, Mr. Sevier said he would have to ride down a side road to see an old friend.

“ Think you can find the way to the school, son? ” he asked.

Of course Jack thought he could. The town was small, and he ought to have no trouble.

But when he failed to pick out the building at once, he asked a boy on the road.

“ Can you tell me where to find the school for young gentlemen? ”

For some reason the query made the boy laugh. “ Young gentlemen, is it? ” he mocked. “ Don’t you think young gentlemen should be able to find their own way about the town? ”

As Jack looked at the leering face of the boy he decided promptly that this was a good time to teach the lad a lesson in courtesy.

So he bent lower over Prince’s neck, and whispered in his ear.

And instantly the intelligent horse reached for the grinning boy and seized him in his teeth by the seat of the trousers!

The surprised victim dangled a moment, then growled:

“ Make him put me down, and I’ll show you the way to the school, young master.”

This time there was appeal in his voice, rather than mockery. Therefore Jack spoke to Prince once more, and a greatly subdued boy was put down on the road. And with marked respect the urchin led horse and rider to the school Jack sought.

“ So you’re the boy from Rockingham, are you?” was the greeting of the very austere-looking master who responded to his knock at the door. “ In with you, then, and get to your lessons! You are late!”

In a moment Jack found himself in a room where some twenty boys were seated on rough benches at rougher desks. A hasty glance showed him that some of these were older than himself, though most were about his own age, or younger. He tried to pick out one or two who looked as if they would be pleasant acquaintances, but the master gave him brief opportunity for the survey.

“ Waste no time! Waste no time!” he urged. “ Here are two of your books. For the others you must arrange with those who own them.”

Then he laid down before Jack a dismal-looking book called “ Instructions for Right Spelling and Plain

Directions for Reading and Writing True English." And a second, equally unattractive, entitled "The Description and Use of the Globes, designed for the use of Young Gentlemen."

At first curiosity led the new student to open the volumes. Then he yawned eloquently. Somehow books like these did not appeal to him. This the master discovered very soon; Jack was lively enough on the playground, and he proved a glorious companion for those who went with him into the country about Staunton; but he did not like to forsake the outdoor life for the schoolroom.

Yet he soon became acquainted with some of the strange precepts of his English book—for instance, this:

"Observe that the first Letter of all proper Names and beginning of Sentences are to be greater Letters."

Even Jack's sense of humor was stirred by the failure of the rule in its very statement to obey its own injunctions. Yet in his own letters home he was as generous with capital letters as was the text-book.

Down in the list of punctuation marks he found the following gem:

"(!) An Admiration is a Note of Wondering or crying out."

And among the examples of words "alike in sound

yet unlike in signification," he found still further opportunities for smiling:

"In looking toward the East, she spilt her yest."

And this: "Ask the Carpenter for his ax."

When he turned to the book on the Globes, he was attracted by a problem which showed the way "to find when the Sun is a-rising at any given time of day, and when the sun is a-going down."

To the boy who was more eager to know some of his schoolmates than to see what was inside his books, the time was long until the period set apart for lunch. But at last the moment came when he could turn to those who sat near him.

With the good fellowship of real boys they met him more than half-way. A number of them appealed to him, but he was especially drawn to two of them, who, from that day, were to be close associates and boon companions.

One of these who was several years older than he, introduced himself as James Robertson.

"I'm a Virginian, too," he said, proudly. "We're living down in Wake County, North Carolina now, but my people thought they wanted me to have schooling up here."

"And I'm Isaac Shelby," was the greeting of a lad several years younger. "I'm glad to say that I'm from Maryland, but we are living not far away, in Virginia."

From that day sturdy James Robertson, wiry Isaac Shelby, and out-door-loving Jack Sevier were inseparable companions. They walked together, they rode together, they fished in company. And when they could feel sure they were unobserved, they practised with the deadly Deckard rifle that was to be such a friend of all of them. All became good shots.

"But we can't equal you, Jack!" Shelby told him one day. "For a boy of twelve you are a wonder! How do you manage to hit dead centre nine times out of ten? Won't the Indians be afraid of you!"

But there came a day when the caution of the sharpshooters was in vain. A visitor at the school saw them.

"Three of your boys are in the forest shooting at a mark," he reported to the master.

"You must give up your dangerous sport," the master told them severely.

After that they took more pains than ever to be unobserved. They hid their guns in an abandoned cabin out on the bank of one of the sources of the Shenandoah, and when they were able, they stole away to this cache.

"You see, we can't give up our practice," Jack said to Isaac. "I think we'll have more use for guns than for spelling and geography."

On a summer evening, when the three friends had

been shooting later than usual, Jack returned to Staunton to see Asher Boyd, a boy who had no attraction for him, riding up to the door of his stable, mounted on Prince. Boyd had taken the horse without permission. That he had ridden the animal unmercifully was evident from Prince's hanging head, distended nostrils, stertorous breathing, and drenched appearance.

"Who gave you leave to touch my horse?" Jack shouted, in anger. "See what you have done to him!"

But Prince was of more importance just then than the boy who had abused the animal. Quickly the young owner took him into the stable. Then for an hour he worked over him, and would not cease until his steed showed no signs of his misadventure.

"Why take so much trouble with him to-night?" Shelby asked, rather impatiently. "We're all tired. Why not wait until morning?"

"The only way to keep a good horse is to treat him right," was the reply of the young lover of horse-flesh.

He thought he could never forgive Boyd. Yet he forgot the sin against Prince a few days later when Boyd's mother descended on the school, asked for a holiday for the boys, and proceeded to give them all a feast of pancakes and cider.

"Tell your mother to come often, Asher!" the pancake-eaters urged the abuser of horses. "We like

her better than Du Fresnoy's Geography, and Able's Trigonometry."

Jack was ready to agree to the latter part of that statement. He had little use for the Trigonometry, except for the portion that gave a solution of the problem :

"Why a Point in the extreme Periphery of a Wheel (notwithstanding the motion of the Wheel is regular, and alike in its whole Revolution) does not move with the same Velocity in one part of the elliptical rim it describes, as it does in another."

Unfortunately, as he thought, there was all too little of this sort of interest in the book. At least that was what he thought until the day when a soldierly looking young man, tall, grave, but with a winning manner, visited the school. Before the visitor left Staunton, Jack, who had been strangely attracted by him, had a talk with him. That night he wrote one of his rare letters home. And this is what he said to his father :

Respected Parent :

To-day I saw a Man who says his name is George Washington. He has seen much of ye world. He tould me some of his Adventures when he was surveying beyond ye Blue Ridge, on ye Shannondoah River, for Lord Fairfax. One night, after a busy Day, he said he lighted into a Room and not being so good a Woodsman as ye rest of ye Company, he striped himself very orderly, and went into ye Bed when to his Surprize he found it to be nothing but a Little Straw Matted to-

gether without Sheets or any thing else. He was glad to get up as soon as ye Light was carried from them. He put on his clothes and lay as his Companions. He made a Promise not to Sleep so from that time forward chusing rather to sleep in ye open Air before a fire.

Then he tould of a day when he rode below what was called the Trough in order to lay of Lots there. He says the Trough is a couple of Ledges of mountain Impassable running side and side together for above 7 or 8 miles and ye River down between them you must ride Round ye back of ye Mountain for to get below them.

At another Time he was near a Wild Meadow where was a Large Stack of Hay after they had Pitched ye Tent and made a very large Fire they pulled out their Knapsack in order to Recruit themselves every one was his own cook their Spits was forked Sticks their Plates was a Large Chip as for Dishes they had none.

No more at present, my Respected Parent, from
Your Dutiful Son,
Jack Sevier

Somehow from the day of this meeting with the stalwart George Washington, Abel's Trigonometry held new interest for Jack. He, too, would be a surveyor! He would explore new lands! He would learn the secrets of the mountain fastnesses where, so the Virginian told him, he could hide a whole army if ever necessity came for fleeing from a successful enemy!

Thirty years later, Jack recalled the words of the visitor to Staunton when, in the darkest day of the

Revolution, Washington thought he might have to use his knowledge of the mountains, gained in his days as a surveyor.

During the remainder of Jack's stay at Staunton he had plenty of time for sport, but he was true to his resolve to learn the secrets of surveying.

And it was not long until he put his knowledge to good use.

CHAPTER II

JACK SEVIER, INDIAN TRADER

“Do you think you are old enough to make the venture, Jack?” Mrs. Sevier asked anxiously. “Remember you are only sixteen, son.”

“Surely, mother, I ought to be able to look after the work I plan. You must not think of me as only sixteen. I am nearly seventeen, you know.”

“Yes, I think we can trust the lad to take care of himself,” Mr. Sevier put in. Jack looked at him gratefully. “The worst he can do is to make a few mistakes, and this will be no more than I did when I was his age. I say we send him out into the world with our blessing.”

“But how about the Indians?” Mrs. Sevier persisted. “What if they carry you away, or wound you? Remember, there will be no woman there to nurse you.”

“Yes, there will, mother. For I am to be married before I go.”

The announcement was a stunner, as Jack knew it would be. For a moment he thought his mother would forbid his making a home of his own. But she realized that it would be far better to ask about the girl.

“Who is she, Jack? Sarah Hawkins, you say? Why, that will be fine. She is a level-headed girl.”

"And Jack is a level-headed boy!" Mr. Sevier put the concluding word to the conversation.

After coming from school at Staunton Jack had helped his father in his store. Then he had decided to go a little farther north into the edge of Shenandoah County. He had always wanted to be master of a trading post, and he had made up his mind, from things he learned when out exploring on Prince, that there was a good chance for the post he dreamed of on the North Fork of the Shenandoah.

"It's fine country," he said, in telling of his hopes. "Boats can use the river, and furs can be brought down very easily. The planters will trade for goods, and the Indian trappers will bring their furs."

"But there is no settlement where you say you are going." Again Mrs. Sevier had an objection ready.

"There will be soon," was the response of her son. She looked at him in amazement. Somehow he seemed to have added a few inches to his height since he had begun to talk of going out into the world on his own hook.

"You see, mother, I can use what they taught me at Staunton, and survey the lands about the place where I want to build the post. I'm going to be like George Washington, who made me want to be a surveyor. I'll always be glad he came to the academy."

"You'll make a good pioneer, Jack!" was Mr. Sevier's only comment.

U. S. 532354

So Jack saddled Prince and rode away to make his fortune. When he reached the place he had in mind, he managed, with the help of two men who were glad to accept the two shillings a day he offered them, to complete his survey. "Six hundred and forty acres of the best land in the valley!" was the grateful thought of the young surveyor, as he concluded the necessary formalities to take over the land about New Market, as he called the nucleus for the settlement.

Then came the building of the double log cabin, half house and half store. In one part he planned to rear a family, and in the other part he was sure he could earn a living for the wife who had promised to share his fortunes.

The two parts of the log structure were connected by an open gallery. The clapboard roof extended over this and the puncheon floor was like that in the house and the store.

The log structure was quite attractive, with its red clay chinking, and the loopholes provided for defense against the Indians.

"The bad savages have not been this way for a long time, and I hope they won't come. But if they show their evil faces, we want to be ready for them." Jack

was speaking to the men who helped him raise the logs for his home.

Then came the stocking of the shelves with bright-colored cloths and gewgaws for trading with the Indians, as well as with the more substantial things which would be demanded by the settlers and the trappers. Jack had to make a trip to Richmond to buy these, and they were brought across the Massanutten Mountain on packhorses. These animals had been taken to the thriving settlement near the Falls of the James, heavily laden with furs which he had gathered from trappers who visited the post, and were glad to wait for their pay until he could return with articles for barter. A few accepted money, but both seller and purchaser preferred goods to cash.

Jack was glad of the chance to cross the mountains to the mysterious region beyond, of which he had heard so much. He had seen something of that country when he was a lad, but not much. He knew the beautiful valley to the west of the range, but he wished to learn about the country farther east.

Curiously he looked about him while he climbed the steep ascent. The rugged slopes were so bare that he was able to look far down in the valley. Then, after crossing a ridge, he picked his way carefully down toward the South Fork of the Shenandoah.

“What have we now?” Jack was looking at an

opening in the rocks which appeared when he was near comparatively level ground.

"That's Ruffin's Cave," was the reply of one of the guides. "You'll find many places like that in this country, caves where the Indians built campfires long ago and where more than once settlers have taken refuge when pressed by the redskins."

"And what's this?" the curious question was repeated when, perhaps a mile farther on, the rough path led close to a depression in the earth.

"Nothing but a sink," was the reply.

"But it must be more than a sink! Feel that current of cool air! Do you suppose there is another cave below?"

"Doesn't look like it. See how the sink is choked with weeds, bushes and stones."

Jack was not satisfied. He thought he would go back to the spot and explore for himself. But he did not do this, and so he missed discovering the opening to wonderful Luray Caverns. These remained unknown for more than one hundred years. Then another curious man was rewarded by finding the entrance which led to miles of marvels beyond.

When Jack's trading post was in running order, he found a little time to ride about the country in search of other wonders of which he had been told. Once he made his way to Natural Bridge in the glen through

which flows one of the headwaters of the James River. There he discovered the initials of George Washington, placed high up on the rock when the young man was on a surveying expedition for Lord Fairfax. On another of the rare days when it was possible to leave the fort he rode Prince to the curious Yellow Springs, where the water left a trail of yellow over everything it touched.

But most of his attention was given to business. He found that he had to have his wits about him if he was to hold his own with those who came to trade. Yet he had a distinct advantage because all who came to New Market liked his genial ways.

“That young Sevier sure is a man!” one of the habitual loafers at the post said to one of his cronies. “You can’t help liking him.”

Yet the liking of the rough frontiersmen for him did not keep them from trying to overreach him in a trade. The effort was made by a trapper who brought in a bundle of skins.

“Want good otter?” was his query. “Just take a squint at them tails!” And he handled the protruding tails as if caressing them.

Jack, too, felt the tails. They were fine. Surely the skins in that bale were good stuff. He thought of the profit he would make when he sent the otter to Richmond.

But he was not so eager for a trade that he forgot

all caution. Something in the shifty eyes of the trapper led him to look a second time at the otter tails. With apparent carelessness, he moved his fingers up to the root of one appendage. Then he did the same thing with a second and a third.

“Odd!” he said, as if musing.

“What is odd?” asked the trapper, prepared to be on the defensive.

“One of the otter seems to have had an accident. That isn’t so strange. The odd thing is that all seem to have had the same sort of accident. They lost their tails and some good-hearted man sewed them on again.”

At that sally there was a hearty laugh from the bystanders. Evidently they were in the secret.

“All right, boys! Suppose we see the joker!” Jack laughed, as he started to undo the bale

And in a moment he had spread out on the rough counter, not otter skins, but the pelts of the fox and the raccoon, to which the tails of the more expensive otter had been fastened.

“Good for you!” Jack said to the would-be joker. “But I wonder if all that trouble would have been paid for by the four extra shillings you would have received.”

The crestfallen trapper colored even under his tan. But Jack put him at his ease and won his undying friendship by adding:

“But you were only trying me out, weren't you? All right! it was a good plan, and you would have deceived me if I hadn't happened on your stitches. I think they are worth paying for. Won't you all go over to that case and select a gift as a reminder of a play that was almost good enough to catch me asleep?”

“I said he was a man, every inch of him!” said the trader of the otter tails. And no one was ready to disagree with him.

Somehow the storekeeper and the men were on better terms than ever after this incident. After they had received Jack's gifts they crowded toward the huge open fire which cast flickering shadows over them and about the room. The strong odor of the furs was evident in spite of the pungent wood smoke that whirled into the store whenever the wind that shrieked about the chimney forgot to blow in the right direction.

It was just the night to talk of Indians, and one of the men was unable to resist the temptation.

This man asked Jack if he had been told of that doleful day when fifty Indians and four Frenchmen descended on the settlers about Mill Creek, not far from New Market.

“That was several years before I came,” Jack replied. “I know something of the tale, but I'd admire to have you tell the straight of it.”

“Well, the neighborhood to which they came was

rather thickly settled. To one of the houses, larger than the other, and better fortified, the people flocked from all around. The savages came to the place soon after the settlers had barred the doors. Angered because they had been balked of what they thought would be easy prey, they set fire to the house and burned the stable, with all the animals there.

“Two young men escaped, and made a brave attempt to bring aid. But those to whom they applied were so few that they did not dare go to the rescue.

“Forty-eight prisoners were taken that day. What an awful journey they had! For six days they kept the trail until they crossed the mountains. Then the Indians held a council, and decided to kill a thirteen-year-old boy among the prisoners.

“Three or four threatening Indians came to him and told him to gather dry wood for a fire. The poor fellow knew what was in the mind of his captors, but he had no choice. With heavy heart he made the wood ready.

“Then the bloodthirsty savages took the wood, cleared and smoothed a ring about a tree, then bound the boy to the tree by a rope, fastened to one of his hands.

“Next they spread the wood around the tree, and a few feet distant. The fire was lighted. As the flames rose the boy, of course, ran around the tree until

his rope was tight, and he touched the bark with his clothing. This was already smoking.

"The Indians grunted, drank, sang and danced. Squaws with sharpened sticks drove the tortured boy away from the tree and toward the flames. When he rushed back to his poor shelter once more, they used their sticks until he was touching the fire.

"You know what happened. At last the boy fell over, and soon death ended his misery."

"Did no one escape?" Jack asked.

"Yes, three years later one of the settlers came here with his three children. They told a dreadful story of privation and suffering. Now they live in a house on the site of the burned cabin. There they are in daily dread of another Indian raid."

"That particular raid was in 1758, wasn't it?" asked another of the party at the fire. "My story is of about the same period, but it has a better ending. The invaders killed two men who were trying to look out for their women. When they saw the Indians coming for them, the brave women took axes and were ready for the onrush. One redskin thought he would find easier the capture of a child. But when he laid hold on the girl, her mother struck the savage on the head with the axe. He let go quickly. And in a little while the Indians went off into the forest. The women had done what men could not do."

"It's your turn, Baldy!" The last speaker nudged the man who squatted near him.

"My story ain't nigh so bloody as yourn!" the man called Baldy began. "Fact is, 'tain't bloody at all. You know Stony Crick, up Woodstock way? Man named Wolfe lives by the crick. He had a way of getting his neighbors in with him when folks hearn tell of Indians on the rampage. One time he had a houseful, when he stepped out to shoot a deer; you see, victuals was scarce in the house, what with so many people. Course he took his dog with him.

"Well, sir, that dog began acting up soon as he was outside. He would run to Wolfe, put his paws on his master's breast, and try to push him back. Then he would run a few steps towards the house. All the time he kept up a great whining.

"Wolfe thought the dog was crazy—until he saw an Indian skulking behind a tree. Didn't take him long to get to cover! He nigh kissed that dog when four more Indians came out from behind trees." ¹

"You don't see any Indians but tame fellows, do you, Sevier?" asked the man who had told the first

¹Years later a traveller came to the Wolfe homestead. Noting a decrepit dog which he was told was twenty-one years old, he asked why the animal was not killed and put out of his misery. "No!" thundered the grateful owner of the animal that had saved his life. "I'd as soon be killed myself as kill that air dog."

story. "Well, I hope you won't. But keep your eye peeled. They'll bear watching."

Trader Jack did not forget the advice. When Indians were in the warehouse he did not seem to have his eye on them, but not a movement or look escaped him. One day, when he was eighteen years old, he noted the greedy eyes of a company of Indians from beyond the mountains who had come to him to trade their furs. They wanted more of the gaudy beads, the looking glasses, the Stroud or blanket cloth, and the bright-colored yard-goods. He saw them exchange whispers, as they tried to look unconcerned.

"Now is the time to keep your weather eye open, Jack!" the tall storekeeper admonished himself.

That night he determined to keep awake, for he expected a call from the dusky men who thought they could find an easier way than work to secure the trinkets they coveted.

And the callers came! As Jack peeped from a chink between the logs near the door of the warehouse, he caught glimpses of one or two skulkers among the trees. Soon there were six of them. Stealthily they approached the building, as if they expected an easy end to their treasure hunt.

What was their surprise to see a flash from the dark building! Immediately one of their number fell. They halted in their amazement. A second flash, and

an Indian dropped his rifle. A third shot followed them as they scurried to shelter.

Jack continued his watch until daylight, but there was no further attempt made on the store.

In the morning another man might have slept. But this was not the way of Jack Sevier. Quickly the word was passed to fifteen or twenty of his neighbors—they were all his friends, for no one could know Jack Sevier without becoming his friend. Together they followed the Indians. This was easy, because of the blood stains left by the wounded savages. The way was long and difficult, for it led through the heart of a dense forest.

At length, however, they came to a cluster of wigwams. There, from the shelter of the trees, Jack saw two wounded braves, and others who watched the squaws care for them.

With a shout, led by the young storekeeper, the men from New Market fell upon the Indians. The unexpected attack unnerved them, and they ran from their huts, leaving behind three or four of their number who had been victims of the first volley from the attackers. When they returned, they found that their village had been burned.

Not yet had they learned their lesson. As Jack expected, they attacked New Market in force, determined to have vengeance on the men who had braved them in their own forest, and had destroyed their wig-

wams. But again Jack, with a hundred men, was ready for them. He drove them back into the forest, then followed them, burned as many villages as he could find, and returned victorious from the second of his long series of thirty-five battles in each of which he was to be the victor.

About this time the Indians evidently decided that the cheapest way to buy Jack's goods was to pay for them with furs, for they made no further attempt on the warehouse!

This was the beginning of Jack's reputation as an Indian fighter. The savages had a wholesome dread of him from that day, and his fellow pioneers looked to him as a leader on whom they could depend.

"But who ever thought of going after the Indians as he does?" asked the most experienced hunter in the little settlement. "We've been content to defend ourselves against the brutes; he attacks them. We have hunted for trees to hide behind; he seems to want to rush them from the open! I'd have said that these tactics would not work. But they do!"

Passing years brought not only fame, but fortune as well, to the young trader. At length the story of his exploits crossed the mountains to Richmond. Lord Dunmore, the Governor, heard of him, and sought him out.

When he saw Jack he was astonished.

"You don't mean that this is the terrible Jack Sevier?" he asked of the officer who pointed to the doughty frontiersman.

"Surely! what did you expect?"

"Not a man so attractive," was the reply. "See that well-knit figure! He steps away as if he owned the universe and was afraid of no man! And those eyes! I'd trust that man anywhere!"

And Governor Dunmore proved his confidence. He asked Sevier to join his forces. When the trader was but twenty-seven he made him a Captain of the Virginia line!

CHAPTER III

THE CALL OF THE FRONTIER

“ You mean that you’re the father of my crony at Staunton, Isaac Shelby? ”

In astonishment mingled with pleasure Jack Sevier asked the question of Captain Evan Shelby, one of his fellow officers in the Virginia line.

In 1772 Governor Dunmore had called the militia into the field because of a threatened Indian outbreak. Fortunately the anticipated trouble was averted, though it was necessary for the men to spend several weeks on guard. When the word was passed that the soldiers could with safety return to their homes, a number of the officers gathered at headquarters for a social hour. During the evening Jack Sevier found himself exchanging experiences with Captain Shelby. For a time the conversation was not of special concern to Jack, though he was mildly interested in hearing the older man tell of adventures with the Indians. Already Indian attacks and Indian conquests were becoming an old story to the New Market fur trader. At length, however, came a remark that stirred him.

“ When my son was in Staunton he learned many things that are proving helpful in our life in the new settlement of Sapling Grove. ”

“So you are Isaac Shelby’s father!” the younger officer said, with a smile that made his always pleasant countenance still more radiant. “I have lost track of Isaac. We were almost inseparable when at the academy. Where is he? I wish I could see him.”

“Why not? He isn’t far away. He is helping me on our cattle farm at Sapling Grove.¹ Why not go home with me to-morrow? We’ll show you some of the finest country in Virginia, a glorious herd of cattle, and hunting that will make you think that Shenandoah County forests can’t offer any spot worth while. You see, I say nothing of Isaac. You and he will have a chance to talk over old times and plan for the future ahead for the country beyond the mountains, and the part red-blooded men like you are to take.”

Before the men separated that night the journey was arranged. And next morning they went on their way to the Sevier home at New Market, where Jack asked his accountant, who had been in charge while he was in the field, to look after the business a little while longer. He saw his wife and his two boys, Joseph and James, who were already sure that they, too, would grow up to be Indian fighters.

“Now for nearly four hundred miles of trail to Sapling Grove!” Captain Shelby said, as the two men

¹ Now the town of Bristol, on the boundary line between Virginia and Tennessee.

mounted their steeds for the journey. Both horses were superb animals; Shelby Farm was already noted for its fine stock. But Jack Sevier rode a wonderful mare, third in the line of succession from Prince, the companion of Jack's school days. Wherever the men went envious eyes followed them; the frontiersmen knew a good horse, and the sight of the two erect men on their blooded mounts was something to be remembered.

After a few days the path led through country so new that nightfall often found them in the forest, with no shelter near. That fact did not trouble them, however. They found all the shelter they wanted in the open, by a spring or a watercourse, and they cooked their meals at the camp-fire. Sometimes this was nothing but bacon and hardtack, but sometimes variety was given to the menu by a deer or a turkey which fell to the Deckard rifle of one of the riders.

There was not much chance for conversation during the daytime, when it was necessary to ride single file over most of the roads. But during the evenings the men made up for the day's silence. Soon they were as well acquainted as if they had known each other for years.

A good beginning was made the first night of camping. Jack began to address his companion as "Captain Shelby."

"Suppose we put a stop to that sort of thing,"

Shelby proposed. "We are far away from places where titles count for anything. I'm going to call you Jack, if you'll call me Shelby!"

"Agreed!" was the hearty response.

Ten days of this pleasant life brought Jack to Sapling Grove, and Isaac Shelby, and boyhood reminiscences.

"How do you like living without any neighbors? You were such a sociable boy, you know," Jack asked.

"Without neighbors? Who told you we have no neighbors? There are thousands of them within easy reach. Sometimes they are very attentive neighbors, too."

"Who are they?"

"They call them Indians. On occasion they are quite persistent in their attentions to us."

Then the Shelbys, both father and son, told so fully of adventures with Indians who had attempted interference with the people at Sapling Grove that, when Jack went to bed, he found sleeping difficult. Who could sleep when the blood was tingling at the thought of mixing up with Indians in the interests of civilization?

"Curious!" Jack thought. "A month ago I thought there could be nothing better for me than the New Market store, trading with the trappers, and seeing a few tame Indians now and then. Now it will be difficult to go back when the visit here is over."

Shrewd Isaac Shelby guessed what was in the mind of his guest, for the next morning he put in words Jack's thoughts of the night before.

"When you go back home I wonder if you will not feel like making your arrangements to come back here. The country needs men like you."

"Where? How?" Jack asked, eagerly. "I have been thinking of the possibility. But I don't see any place for me here at Sapling Grove."

"We would like to have you here, and we could find something for you to do. But there is something far better within easy reach. Less than twenty miles south of us, down on the Watauga River, lives James Robertson with his little company of adventurers who, two years ago, built their cabins in a bit of earthly paradise. I've been bragging of what we have here at Sapling Grove, but you should see Watauga, or Watauga Old Fields, as they call the district where Robertson's men are. And if you want Indians, there is the place for you! They are located in the midst of the hunting grounds of twenty thousand savages. Robertson had an eye for the best."

"Robertson? James Robertson, did you say?" Jack was interested. "That can't be the boy who was with us at Staunton, Isaac."

"Surely! Odd I haven't told you about him. We've been so busy talking about ourselves that we have kept

still about the king of the whole country. Remember how he ruled the academy? Then you know how the settlers look up to him down below."

"Why not go down there to-morrow?" Isaac's father asked. "Sevier must see his old friend. And I shall be surprised if Robertson doesn't make him a Watauga man before he is done with him."

The journey to Watauga required but one day. The way was rough, but the travellers managed to have some conversation as they passed through the forest, at times almost in the shadow of the mountains. The halt for lunch gave further opportunity for telling Jack enough about Robertson's settlement to make him even more eager to talk with the man on the outpost.

"Robertson left Staunton in 1760, you remember," Isaac Shelby explained. "Then he went to his home in North Carolina, not far from the Yadkin River, where Daniel Boone lived. When Boone came back from his first and second trips beyond the Alleghenies he told such tales of the country that his neighbors wondered if these were true. One region about which he said much was the Watauga Country where we are now going."

"While we're over there we must show him Boone's beech tree, with its inscription, on Boone's Creek, a branch of the Watauga," Isaac's father put in. "This

tells one reason for the hunter's notion that this is a great country. I think I have a copy of it with me. Yes, here it is." ²

D. Boon
 CILLED A. Bar On
 in ThE trée
 yEAR 1760

When the paper had been duly examined, Isaac continued his tale.

"The Virginians who went down to Wake County were a canny folk, so they decided to send one of their number with Boone when he went back over the mountains in 1769. The man they chose was James Robertson, our old schoolmate."

"How could he leave home?" Jack Sevier asked. "He had a family to look after, didn't he?"

"Can you ask that? Didn't you leave your wife and children up at New Market? Robertson was prospecting for a new home for them, just as I believe you will be doing before many days.

"Robertson knew that he was to plan, not only for himself but for his friends. They wanted to live where land was more fertile, and where they could forget the hard life they had known under that rascally Colo-

² The inscription may still be seen on the old tree.

nial Governor, Tryon. They remembered the pleasures of the old Virginia days, and they wanted to be in Virginia once more.

“The journey was long, but you remember how stout-hearted Robertson was. He can stand any hardship! Through the forest he went with his companion, to the great Stone Mountains. Over this barrier they went by a path that was all but impassable. When it seemed that no way could be found, Robertson insisted that Indians and Boone and deer had been that way before, and he would not give up.

“Robertson has told me how the mile-high mountain peaks all about him made him feel that Boone’s story was true. He had told of a valley warm in winter and cool in summer. Surely this needed mountains to protect it. Here were the mountains. Where was the valley?

“He found it! Soon he saw it from the heights. He called the vision before him ‘The Promised Land.’

“I must not try to describe to you what he saw. Wait until this evening. You will see for yourself, and you will not wonder at his words.”

“And this messenger returned to tell the story of his find to his neighbors?” Jack inquired.

“Not yet. He spent the summer in the valley, planted corn, gathered it, selected sites for houses and farms, and started back to North Carolina.

“ This time he was alone, and he had a hard journey. More than once he lost his way. His provisions were exhausted. His ammunition was gone. He lived on nuts until the nuts were gone. At last he gave up, and thought that he would never reach his home.

“ We must ask him to tell what happened next—the sound of voices, a strange sound in that mountain wilderness, and the coming of two hunters, who cared for him and showed him the way to civilization.”

Here Evan Shelby interrupted. “ That is one of the most remarkable stories in the life of this remarkable man. Evidently he was intended for some great work. Think of being found just in his moment of greatest need, when no one had been in that spot for months, and probably no one went there for months afterward! That escape was no accident,” he added, reverently. “ Robertson agrees with me that plans for Watauga were not all made here on earth.

“ In his North Carolina home the neighbors were glad to hear the good news about Watauga. In the spring Robertson led sixteen families back to the smiling valley. I believe the story of this journey will be one of the great tales of the winning of the frontier. This, too, you must hear Robertson tell.

“ Then came a surprise. In Robertson’s paradise they found a dozen families who had come down from Vir-

ginia. But there was land for all, and life would be made easier and pleasanter by the larger neighborhood."

"And this was only two years ago?" Jack asked. "Then we'll see the country almost at the beginning."

"Ah, you're a real pioneer, my boy!" smiled Evan Shelby. "Again I say that I think Watauga will get you, too."

"And how about you? Sounds as if you would give up Sapling Grove for Robertson's valley. Wouldn't you like that, Isaac?"

"Watauga is good, Jack," was the reply, "but I can't help thinking about the country farther west, where Daniel Boone went. I believe that is the country for me. Some day I feel I shall be in Kaintuckee."³

As Isaac Shelby talked, Jack Sevier had been turning over some of the papers in his pocket.

"Didn't you say that Robertson's neighbors wanted to get back to Virginia? Do they think they are in Virginia down here at Watauga?"

"Of course they do. Where could they be?"

"I wonder if they are not still in North Carolina, after all? Wouldn't that be hard on them?"

"In North Carolina! How could that be?"

"I mustn't be too sure," Jack said. "Do you remember the visit paid by George Washington to

³ Years passed before Isaac Shelby had his wish. He went to Kentucky in 1788, and became the first Governor of the new State in 1792.

Staunton? You recall, perhaps, that I told you how he stirred me up to a new interest in mathematics. I have had my turn at surveying, but since the surveying days I have kept up my trigonometry. It became a sort of habit with me, when I travelled, to take note of direction and distance, and to work out by trigonometry my latitude and longitude from that of my starting point which I knew."

"So that's what you were doing on our trip down from New Market, was it?" Evan Shelby asked.

"Yes, that was it. It helps me to keep up knowledge that may be useful to me again some day."

"And what is the result?" Isaac asked, curiously.

"Well, so far as I can tell, after making allowance for error, Sapling Grove is about half-way between 36° and 37° latitude.

"Why, that is the southern boundary of Virginia!" was Evan Shelby's comment.

"Then the Watauga settlement, being located some twenty miles south of Sapling Grove, is in North Carolina territory!" Isaac added.

"If you are right, there is a grave consequence," was Evan Shelby's serious comment. "The Treaty of Fort Stanwix, by which the Indians made over millions of acres of their lands, gave the right of settlement above the line of $36^{\circ} 30'$, not below. Those who live

below that line are in Indian territory, and so are liable to all the penalties of being out of bounds, with no one to look out for their interests."

"It looks that way, I'm afraid."

At that moment the little party topped a height from which they beheld the smiling valley of the Watauga.

Jack Sevier stood in rapt silence, while the Shelys watched him with a smile.

"We knew you would be astonished!" Isaac said.

"That valley must be twenty-five or thirty miles long," Jack calculated.

"Yes, all of that," was Evan Shelby's response. "Thirty miles long and twenty miles wide! As you see, forests and luxuriant pastures are everywhere. Do you see that bit of green over there? Those are the Watauga Old Fields, which add much to the area of the valley."

"And streams! Look at them!"

"Yes, over there are the Holston and the Watauga, with numerous tributaries," Evan Shelby explained. "A little farther south the Nolichucky flows down from its highland sources into the series of mountain-girt valleys two thousand feet above the sea."

"And there lives Robertson, with his scores of neighbors who were never so happy as they are to-day," Isaac added.

“So they think they are in Virginia!” Jack said. “I say we keep to ourselves what I have said about my idea as to their latitude, especially about the Indian land. When I may be all wrong, it would be a pity to upset the minds of a contented people.”

The three who sought Watauga shook hands on their agreement, then turned toward the smiling valley, full of anticipation of what they would find there.

CHAPTER IV

FOUR INDIAN FIGHTERS TOGETHER

THE sun was setting after a delightful May day when the Shelbys and Jack Sevier, their guest, climbed down to the valley, and approached the scattered log houses of the Watauga settlement.

Their coming was heralded to the watchful pioneers by the barking of a score of dogs, trained to give warning of the nearness of strangers. From nearly every house men, women, boys, and girls came out. And how they cheered when the visitors were close enough to reveal their character! The coming of strangers to the secluded valley was an event.

"There is Robertson!" Evan Shelby said, with satisfaction. "I thought he would be at home to-night."

Other inhabitants of the settlement remained near their houses, but the man who had been pointed out was coming to meet them.

Jack Sevier watched him curiously. As the man drew near enough to show his stalwart form, the young trader expressed his astonishment.

"How he has changed since Staunton days! I doubt if I would have known him."

"Yes, you would! Wait, and you will say I am right," Isaac smiled.

At that moment the man who was climbing toward them shouted :

“ Welcome, friends! Shelby, I hoped it was you. And Isaac, too! Well, that’s great! ”

Now Jack was smiling. “ You are right, Isaac; there is no mistaking that voice. ”

“ The voice is fine, ” Evan Shelby agreed. “ But wait until you see and talk to the man behind the voice. ”

Jack watched Robertson as he stepped briskly up the trail. He saw a man of medium height, with dark hair, whose fair skin showed the months of exposure in all kinds of weather. Beneath his bushy brows kindly eyes looked toward the strangers.

Jack soon learned that Robertson’s pleasant face could be set and stern when this was necessary. Yet even the Indians and the border ruffians, against whom he guarded the settlement, while they hated him, knew that they could count on his courtesy and his calmness.

“ He has winning ways, and he makes no fuss! ” was the comment of Oconostota, the Indian chief who was one of the greatest enemies of the new settlement beyond the mountains.

While Jack had been measuring and admiring this leader among men, Robertson had come up to the travellers. After exchanging warm greetings with the Shelbys, he turned inquiringly to the third man.

“ What, Jack Sevier, as I live! Who would have

thought of seeing you? Come down with me to our palace. No one more welcome than you three has come near us in the two years we have been on Watauga!"

Soon they passed curious men, who greeted them as they went by, casting admiring glances at the four stalwarts. For Robertson's companions were as remarkable as himself. Gray-haired Captain Evan Shelby was a soldier, every inch of him. Isaac, the eldest of his four sons, was larger than his father, and his whole bearing showed that he was born to command; and Jack Sevier was taller than his companions, erect, with flashing eye, and a frank, open countenance that made him throughout his life, a marked man, wherever he went.

Four great men had come together that evening. But Jack Sevier was to be the greatest of them all, a leader of men, in whom Indians and white men alike took keen delight, a friend of all, and a stalwart foe of everything that was in any way questionable.

"There's the house over on the island," Robertson said hospitably to his guests. "The wife will have a warm welcome for you, and the children, too.

"The house may be small, but there is a place in it for all of you, for as long as you can stay with us."

The house to which Robertson led them was larger than its neighbors, but, like them, was built of logs. His was a "double-barrelled cabin," with two large

rooms on the ground level. These were connected by a passage-way. At the rear was a lean-to in which the cooking was done and the meals were served. Above were two attic rooms; these were reached by ladders instead of stairways. The logs in the walls had been cut and fitted carefully, the floors were of axe-hewn oak planks, or "puncheon," and the huge chimney was built of stone, although many of the settlers had chimneys made of sticks and clay. The window apertures were mere cuts through several logs, over which heavy paper was fitted; bear's grease made this substitute for glass so the light could pass through it, though nothing but shadows could be seen by those who looked in or out. Heavy shutters closed these openings; these were for use in time of storm or danger.

Through the door, built of heavy, hewn planks, and hospitably ajar on its ingenious wooden hinges, Robertson ushered the three hungry men.

Mrs. Robertson came forward to greet them.

"Wife, you've fed a host of strangers, but never men more welcome than these. I am sure they are ready for a good meal, and I know you will have it for them."

"Supper will be ready in a few minutes," she said, smiling. "I put their names in the pot when you started to meet them."

As she hurried off to her pots and kettles in the huge fireplace, her husband paid his tribute to her.

"What a wife I have! You know, Isaac and Jack, what an ignoramus I was at Staunton. Well, she has made me ashamed that I know so little, and has taught me what I wouldn't get at school."

"Are you as good at figures as you used to be?" Jack asked. "Remember, Isaac, how we wondered at him because he could do all sorts of problems in his head?"

Isaac's reply was a question to Robertson.

"How much land have the men cleared in Watauga, and how much corn did they raise last year?"

"Let's see," was the reply. "I have 39 acres cleared, Carter has 42, and Isbell has 27."

Then, after making rapidly a statement of the land of thirty or more men, he gave the total without an instant's hesitation.

"Hear that, Father?" Isaac asked. "Now let me see if he is right. I took down his figures as he gave them.

"Yes, he had the correct total. How did he do it? It has taken me all this time to get the result."

"Now give us the corn raised by each, and tell us the average raised per acre in the whole settlement."

Once more the individual figures were given quickly, the total was stated, and the desired average, too. And

again the results were verified by Isaac, who made the comment :

“ There is really no use taking the trouble to get the results in the ordinary way after he tells them. I never knew him to be wrong.”

“ He doesn't know how he does it, either,” Mrs. Robertson said, as she called the men to the table.

“ There's another problem I've been figuring out which bothers me more than these little matters you've been asking about,” the host remarked. “ But suppose we wait until after we sup before talking of it. I don't want to take away your appetite.”

An hour later the four men were grouped around the fireplace which was the overwhelming feature of the living-room. A blaze was welcome even on an evening in May, for nights were cool in the elevated Watauga valley.

“ Now tell us about that problem you were talking of,” Evan Shelby asked. “ What is bothering you? ”

“ You know how my neighbors in North Carolina asked me to find for them lands beyond the mountains?” Robertson asked. “ They said I was to be sure to find good springs and rich land, and enough of both to take care of all of them. But they wanted something more; they were tired of the tyranny of Governor Tryon, and they wished to live beyond his borders.

"I told them I was taking them to Virginia. But only a few weeks ago, when I was out surveying, I began to wonder if we are not still in North Carolina. I don't want to think it, and I dread to tell the men, but every test I make seems to say that we are not in Virginia territory.

"Jack, you were always good at trigonometry. Wish you could help me out. If you will show me that I am wrong, you will make me feel like shouting for joy."

Jack looked at the Shelbys. Noting their silent agreement, he told of what they had decided to say nothing about.

"I wish I could tell you that you are wrong. I can't do this. Not two hours ago we were talking of this very thing, and were going over the figures that seem to tell just what is worrying you."

Robertson sighed, then lifted his broad shoulders and expanded his chest as he said:

"All right! If it is, it is. Let's make the best of it. We wanted to get away from North Carolina's royal Governor, but it seems we have not done so. We'll just have to think that North Carolina has been our friend."

"How can that be?" Jack asked. "I thought you said North Carolina's tyranny was impossible to bear."

"It's this way," Robertson smiled. "Tyranny, by

her servant Tryon, drove the people to the woods out here; made them just mad enough to be ready to fight for their rights."

"You knew you were facing problems when you came over the mountains?" Captain Shelby asked.

"Of course we knew we would have savages all about us, but we dreaded them less than the oppression of Great Britain."

"Then you are glad you came?" Jack knew what the answer would be, but he liked to hear the Watauga leader talk.

"Glad! Why, boy, ours is the best settlement west of the Alleghanies! We are the advance guard of civilization, which is bound to go clear across the continent."

"Then this is the place for me!" Jack rose to his feet in his enthusiasm. "I can't stay back where all is quiet when there is real man's work to be done here!"

Robertson's eyes kindled. "You are the very man we need, Jack. But hadn't you better see a little more and think a little longer before you make a decision for which you may be sorry?"

"I've seen enough, and I've thought all I need to. The store at New Market is too tame for me. I want to live where I can be of some use in building up this country. And here is the place!"

Then Captain Shelby spoke cautiously.

“Robertson may be right, Jack. Don’t go too fast. You can win position and fame back in Virginia. Life is easy there; it will be hard here. There you have prospered until you have enough goods laid by to spend the rest of your days in comfort. Down here there is danger, and privation, and a chance to spend money rather than to make it. If I am not mistaken, you who are a rich man to-day will be a poor man in a few years. Isn’t that right, Robertson? Haven’t you spent nearly everything you had saved? Have you had any help in getting your men ready to withstand Indian attacks?”

“Jack, you see how it is. What will your wife say? Hadn’t you better look out for the future of those two fine boys you have been telling us about?”

“You can’t stop me, Shelby.” Jack’s countenance glowed as he spoke. “This is the place for me, and it is the place for my wife and my boys. They would like life here. And what do I care for easy fame in a place where the problems are all solved? What is the use of money unless it can be used for the country and for civilization? I’m twenty-seven years old, and it’s time I was in the thick of the struggle for life and liberty and joy.

“Robertson, will you take my hand? I’m with you! As soon as I can go back to New Market and dispose of my property there, wife and the boys and

I are coming down to share with you this glorious life in Watauga!"

"Where neither Virginia nor North Carolina will protect us, though both claim us; where Indians are all around, and we unaided must keep them from going against the people of both North Carolina and Virginia, if we would protect ourselves!" Robertson said, with emotion, as he took the offered hand.

"How many of you are there in Watauga?" Captain Shelby asked, as Robertson and Jack resumed their seats by the fire.

"About two hundred, men, women and children. Forty of the company are men. You will be the forty-first, Jack."

"How do you keep order?"

"We haven't had any disorder. The people have been too busy to get into trouble of any kind. I suppose the day will come when we must have some seat of government, but the need has not yet been seen."

"Do you find life dull out here, so far from your old friends?"

"Dull? There is no chance for that. We're too busy. What with our tasks and the things we do for each other there is not much time to spare. We have our good times—we get most of them out of helping our neighbors. If there is a new house to be built we are all bidden to the raising. Sometimes a man needs

help in clearing a field; two or three dozen of us can make short work of the trees and the underbrush. And it is so much easier to get in wood for the winter by a chopping bee that keeps us all busy than by working each man for himself."

"What do you do with your evenings?"

"Most of the time we are too weary to worry about the evenings. But sometimes we get together for a dance. Then in nearly every house there are a few books. We pass them about. Or perhaps a lot of the people crowd into the house here, because it is the largest, and wife reads to them, or we have a sing out of Rippon's Hymns, and a bit from the Bible. You see, there is no chance to get blue on the Watauga."

Soon the guests climbed the ladder to the attic, and dropped asleep in a hurry.

Next morning they were out early with their host, who proudly showed them over the little settlement. In the midst of their admiring study of their surroundings they heard excited voices on the public road which led along the Watauga.

"What's the trouble here?" Robertson asked, when, with his guests, he had turned to the knot of men who had gathered about two strangers, arrivals that very morning.

A bystander explained. "This man Shoats here

grabbed the horse ridden by—Stranger, what's your name?"

"Preble, John Preble."

"—ridden by Preble. Preble resisted, and there was a fight."

"He's my nag," put in Shoats, sullenly. "I won him on a wager, justly, and Preble wouldn't give him up like a man."

"I never saw the man until this morning, when we met on our way down from the hills," protested Preble.

Then Robertson showed his remarkable ability to measure men. "Shoats, hand over that nag. You are one of the gang of horse-thieves that has been hiding up in Holston mountain. We don't want you here. Preble, hold on to your horse, and don't mix with men like him. You're the kind we want here, and if you've come to live among us, well and good."

"But how about Shoats?" Jack asked. "Isn't he to be punished?"

"Don't bother about him," Robertson said. "He'll soon take poplar."

The Watauga leader was right. Shoats did take poplar—that is, he was forced into a dugout, made of a poplar log, and was sent hurrying down the river.

"The time has come to form some sort of government for our settlement," was Robertson's comment, as

the crowd attracted by the attempted horse-theft broke up.

“Then I came just at the right time to see something worth while!” Jack Sevier said, with satisfaction.

“That’s your humble way of looking at it,” Captain Shelby remarked, as he took the arm of the ex-trader from New Market. “But I rather think you are to be one of the leaders in working out the new problems of Watauga.”

CHAPTER V

“NOLICHUCKY JACK” WINS HIS NAME

THE incident of the horse-thief who “took poplar” led to serious talk of doing something to prevent such incidents and to punish offenders.

But the talk came to nothing for a time, because of the visit of a party of Cherokee Indians to Watauga, and the events which followed.

Jack Sevier was talking of the future with James Robertson when a man broke in upon their quiet talk with the shout:

“Old man Devor has been killed by the savages. They found him down in his cabin, some time during the early morning, and, after killing him they stole away with all the plunder they could carry with them.”

“I thought the Indians about here were friendly!” Sevier said to Robertson.

“They are, most of them. But these murderers must be part of a band of men who have been outlawed because they refuse to live according to tribal decisions and plans.”

“All the more reason for going after them at once!” Sevier declared. “You say there are eight of them? Very well, then; I want to lead a party of eight in

search of them. Do you think I can persuade men to go with me, Robertson?”

“There’s no reason why you should not make the attempt,” the Watauga leader replied.

He thought, from his keen appraisal of Sevier, that he might succeed in raising his little company in two or three days. What was his astonishment, then, when within four hours of Sevier’s departure from the Robertson house, he returned with seven burly men, each carrying a Deckard rifle over his shoulder.

“Lead us to the lying savages!” they shouted, as they took their station before Robertson’s house. They were eager to be off, not only because the defeat of the Indians would reveal the weakness of the natives, but because the success of their leader would draw attention to what they believed was the unconquerable strength of Jack Sevier. Already they had all confidence in him, though they had not seen him in action.

“Seems strange, I know,” one of the men said to his companion. “Two weeks ago we had not seen him, and two hours ago we had not thought of such a thing as going out under his guidance. But one good look into his face when he asked me to help avenge Devor’s death was enough. Sevier can have all I’ve got.”

Six men agreed with this judgment of the seventh, so when Jack Sevier led the way into the forest, the victory over the murderers was already half won.

"They went down toward the Nolichucky," Abraham Lewis said, after examining the faint trail left by the savages. "There is not much to go on," he added, "but I feel sure of my direction."

All night Sevier and his bold seven kept on toward the Nolichucky, another of the system of rivers that make the country chosen by Robertson so attractive. At dawn, when they were close to the river, upon which it was thought the refugees planned to float to safety, Sevier said:

"Do you follow the trail, while I cut across to the river bank. Thus I may be able to drive the band toward you, while you will have a chance to drive the Indians back toward the river. We must make them think that a large party is surrounding them."

When Jack reached the water, he saw a large raft tied to a willow on the bank.

"Just as I thought," he said to himself. "A little longer, and they would have been far down the stream."

No Indians were in sight, so he stepped cautiously down the bank. Suddenly he saw just below him two of the Indians who were watching the main party of their pursuers. Before they could turn their guns on Jack, he pulled the trigger of his Deckard. And the gun missed fire!

This gave the Indians their opportunity. They tried to fire, but before they could do so Jack jumped down

on them. Somehow he managed to drag both Indians down, and to take his place on top of them. One of the prostrate foes, escaping from the clutch of the white leader, leaped to the raft, where he secured a tomahawk. By this time the second Indian was on his feet and was grappling with Sevier, whom he tried to hold until the tomahawk could be buried in his skull. But Jack was too quick for them both. With a well-timed kick he doubled up the man with the tomahawk. Then he snatched up his rifle, which he had thrown down when he leaped on the savages, and shot the Indian who held the tomahawk.

But the second and larger Indian now grasped Jack and tried to overcome him. The resistance was so effective, however, that both men lost their balance and fell into the river. Each grasped the other and tried to hold the head of his opponent under water. Finally Jack succeeded in drowning the Indian.

When the victor regained the bank, he learned that the seven men who had followed the trail of the Indians had come up with them, and had overcome them in a hand-to-hand conflict. Five Indians lay dead on the ground, while the sixth had fled.

Jack congratulated the men on the splendid results of their contest. But they insisted that the praise for the victory belonged to him.

“When we saw you fighting two Indians single-

handed, we could not do less than fight seven to six. You're the boy for us! Hereafter we ask nothing better than to serve under Jack Sevier."

"Hurrah for 'Nolichucky Jack!'" shouted Abraham Lewis.

"Nolichucky Jack! Nolichucky Jack!" the cheer was taken up by the other men in the party.

The cry must have been heard by the fugitive Indian. Evidently, when he was able to steal away through the forest, he took with him the name for the doughty leader who had left seven braves dead on the ground and in the water. When he told the story he gave the impression that "Nolichucky Jack" alone had won the victory. He must be a wizard!

From that day the fame of "Nolichucky Jack" became even greater among the superstitious Indians. The settlers had a new leader who could not be vanquished! Nolichucky Jack was his name. And the hearts of the bravest quailed as they thought of him and of what he might do to them.

Unconscious of the fact that he had won the name which was to be a wonderful asset to him, Jack Sevier led his men back to the Watauga. There they told with gusto of his achievement, while Jack insisted that the credit for the victory belonged to them.

The raid of the Indians and the success of Jack's party seemed to make more necessary than ever the

taking of steps that would enable the little settlement on the Watauga to give to itself the care withheld both by Virginia and North Carolina.

“The first thing we need is stronger defenses,” Robertson said to Sevier. “Have you any suggestions to make as to what we should do?”

The two leaders called others into conference. Then they decided to strengthen Fort Watauga on Gap Creek.

“And we must have a stockade around the cabins, built of pieces of timber firmly set in the ground,” Sevier said. “The upper ends of the timbers must be sharpened so that they will discourage those who try to climb over. Within the enclosure there should be a blockhouse with a ditch surrounding it.”

“Suppose we build the blockhouse with the logs of the second story projecting several feet over the first story,” added Robertson. “Then there could be look-out stations and portholes here and there.”

“Let’s be sure there is plenty of water and wood within reach of the fort,” cautioned John Carter.

So a call was sent out for a great union effort, and on the appointed day forty men assembled, with axes and spades and hammers.

What a busy scene there was in the forest that day! First came the clearing of the site, then the felling and trimming of the great trees, and the hewing of the logs for the palisades and for the walls of the fortress.

When all was ready brawny arms planted the palings and laid the logs. Others hewed out the shingles for the roof, and laid them on the rough rafters.

The women, too, had their part in the activities of the day, helping to make sport of what was a tremendous task. They brought eatables from their cabins, and at noon they called their husbands, sons and brothers to sit down to buffalo meat and deer steak, to delicious wild turkey, to corn pone and johnny cake (or journey cake, as it was called originally, from the fact that it was the standby of those who were travelling through the forest).

When all were satisfied, the women cleared away the wreckage, while the men returned to their building, and the boys and girls resumed their games among the trees or on the bank of the Watauga.

“Now that the first part of our task is out of the way, we must plan some sort of government for our little community,” Robertson declared, when a weary but grateful company of ten or twelve men met in the ample sitting-room of the speaker.

“Suppose we have a gathering of all the men to-morrow evening,” was the suggestion of John Carter. “Then we can talk over what is to be done.”

“And between now and that time let’s ask Nolichucky Jack to think out a plan,” Robertson said, giving to his young friend the name by which he was to

become famous among both settlers and Indians. “If he knows how to govern men as well as he knows how to fight—and I think he does—all we need is to listen to what he has to say, and then do it.”

When the men met in May, 1772, according to the call, Robertson was made chairman of the meeting. After a brief introduction, he said:

“Jack Sevier was a stranger to you two weeks ago, when he came among us with the Shelbys, though I knew he would not be a stranger long. We were all glad when he decided to cast in his lot with us. We are more than ever glad now that he has shown us what he can do as an Indian fighter. I suggest that we hear from Nolichucky Jack.”

Cheers greeted the suggestion, and then became vociferous when Sevier stood before his new associates.

“Thank you, men!” he began. “I wanted to listen first to what some of the rest of you have to say. I am sure your plan would be all that we need. But now that you have called me, I suggest that the chairman appoint a committee to decide on the form of government we should have. Wouldn’t it be far better to take the judgment of eight or ten men than to let one man decide what we are to do?”

The suggestion met with hearty approval, and a committee was named. Robertson tried to limit the number to seven or eight, but there were so many who,

he felt, should be named because of their wisdom and ability that the committee as finally agreed on had thirteen members.

When the thirteen men had decided upon a simple series of regulations for the government of the little settlement, five men were appointed as a court. And when the court held its first session the roll was called.

"John Sevier!" was the first name. Then came James Robertson, Charles Robertson, Zachariah Isbell, and John Carter.

"We have a big task before us," Nolichucky Jack, as the leader of the court, said at the first session. "Our job is to administer justice according to the laws of Virginia, as well as to record deeds and arrange for other public matters."

One of the first cases to come before the new court was that of two men charged with horse-theft. The evidence was conclusive. After a fair trial sentence was pronounced on them that was calculated to strike terror to the hearts of other outlaws.

"It is ordered that they be confined in the publick pillory for the space of one hour, and that each of them have both their ears nailed to the pillory, and severed from their heads. That they receive at the publick whipping post thirty-nine lashes upon their bare backs, well laid on, and that each of them be branded upon their right cheek with the letter T, and that this sentence

be put into execution between the hours of twelve and four this afternoon."

"Sort of hard, isn't it?" was the comment of a bystander who heard the sentence pronounced.

"What would you say if your horse had been stolen?" Jack Sevier asked him. "Think what our horses mean to us! They pack furs for us; they carry us along the trail; they draw the plow and help to till our fields; they drag from the forest the logs of which we make our cabins. I say nothing of the horse as a companion, yes, a friend. And these men stole horses. Worse still, they are setting a bad example to the Cherokees, who are learning to steal the faithful animals. Unless we are careful, the time will come when all our horses will be in the hands of our enemies. Then what will happen to us? Death would be a mild penalty for a horse-thief. So you see our verdict is merciful!"

Sevier's own horse, as well as those of many of his neighbors, was needed very soon after the punishment of the horse-thieves, in drawing from the spot where the trees were felled the great logs designed for the new home on the Watauga of the Virginian who already had become a part of the life of the frontier settlement.

Crude furniture was fashioned for the house—tables with hewn tops, chairs which were mere shaped sections of tree trunks, and beds, each built on four dogwood posts which were anchored to holes in the

floor and to the crude joists in the ceiling. Each post had a fork. But on two of these forks side bars were placed. Across the side bars were slats of hickory, bound to the bars with withes of elm bark.

When the house was ready, the proud owner went to Virginia and brought back his wife and his two boys, Joseph, aged almost seven, and James, who was nine years old, as well as his father, Valentine Sevier, and his brothers, Valentine, Abraham, and Robert.

What a cavalcade that was! The women rode with the household goods in the mountain wagon, built with a dip in the middle, and a rear much higher than the front, for protection against robbers and Indians.

Before the wagon rode Nolichucky Jack on his favorite horse, while other horses carried goods cunningly arranged in packsaddles. These packsaddles had been fashioned from tree forks which grew like the wishbone of a chicken. On one of the saddles were places for the Sevier boys, but they usually preferred to run ahead of the procession, or to go back among the cattle and the dogs which followed the wagon. In the morning, before they became tired, they could only with difficulty be kept from darting into the forest when a curious dog stirred up a rabbit, a squirrel, or even an animal much more dangerous.

But warnings of danger meant nothing to the boys, until the day when the party came to two men by the

roadside who told of their experience. They were searching for horses which had been stolen by Indians when they were attacked from ambush. Their adventure Nolichucky Jack later described in a letter :

“ One of the men received a ball through the sleeve of his hunting shirt and the other received one in the boddy of his, but neither of the young men was hurt. They killed one of the Indians and shoot the second in his brest. Then the other Indians retired. They were on guard for fear of more attack, but when we came up with them nothing more had happened.”

When James and Joseph heard the story told by the men by the roadside they kept close to their father's horse until they were near the settlement. Then they felt safe enough to renew the fun which gave their parents much concern for their safety.

At last they were safely in the new home on the banks of the Watauga. The boys had thought that nothing could be better than the nights by the campfire in the forest, but they were glad of the chance to rest in the crude beds their father had built.

Next day Nolichucky Jack found that he had come just in time for an event that threatened the happiness of the settlers. A man came to the Watauga who said he was Alexander Cameron.

“ I come from John Stuart, the agent of North Carolina for the Indians,” he introduced himself.

"You have a fine place here, a mighty fine place," he began. "Wouldn't it be a pity if you should have to give up the homes you have won with so much toil?"

"No chance of that!" Robertson said. "Is there, Sevier?"

"What could make us give them up?" was the reply.

"The law could!" Cameron smiled, as if he enjoyed the thought of what he was about to say.

"You see, you people have picked a fine site for your homes. But you didn't know that you had settled on Indian land?"

"That can't be!" John Carter was emphatic.

"Yes, it can be!" came the Indian trader's reply. "You think you are in Virginia, do you? Well, that's a mistake; you are in North Carolina, and because you are on land west of the North Carolina mountains, you must move on.

"You think you came westward to Virginia. You didn't. You followed the rivers, which flow southward, not to the west. They have led you where you have no right to stay."

"No right?" asked Jack Sevier. "Who has a better right than men who have carved out their homes from the forests?"

"No, you have no right to be here, and you will not be allowed to stay."

“Not be allowed?” It was James Robertson who put the question. “Who will interfere with us?”

“I will!” Cameron said. “That is, the Colony of North Carolina, which I represent, will see to it that you go away from the lands of my friends here, the Cherokee chiefs, whom you see in my company.”

One of the Cherokees put in a word:

“Our land!” he glowered. “We want.”

“And you shall have it!” Cameron was positive and defiant.

“Let’s talk about this,” Sevier said to Robertson. So a few of the settlers went a little way from Cameron.

They were in the midst of their conference when Cameron approached them, and whispered:

“I think we can fix this up, with very little trouble. It is true that I have my orders from those who sent me here, but I have a warm feeling for you. You have, as you say, worked hard for your homes, and it would be a pity to drive you out. If you will be reasonable, I think I can see that you are not molested in your homes.”

“How could you do that?” Robertson asked.

“I am an officer of the British government, and what I say will be done,” was the reply.

“You are right in thinking that we will stay here,” was Sevier’s response to the proposal of the rascally Indian agent. “But our stay will not be by any

arrangement with you. We have made a home here in Watauga, and we defy you to drive us away."

"You defy me, do you?" Cameron was indignant. "You don't know whom you are talking to!"

"Perhaps not," agreed Sevier, "but you do not know to whom you are talking. We are free men, and we are planning to stay just where you find us."

"But think of the Cherokees, the real owners of the land!" And Cameron pointed to the chiefs.

"These men are our friends, and they will not bother us," Robertson backed up Sevier. "Go back and tell the man who sent you that we do not propose to pay one penny as a bribe, and that we defy him to send us out of the country which we have made our own."

And Cameron, much against his will, was forced to re-cross the mountains without accomplishing his purpose to frighten the Wataugans into paying hush money.

"Now we must do something to prove to Cameron and those back of him that our boast has something to it besides empty words," Sevier said to the little company to which Cameron had spoken. "We have said that we will stay. I say, let us plan a way to keep our homes!"

CHAPTER VI

AGAINST HEAVY ODDS

“LIGHT, and come into the house!”

A horseman paused before Jack Sevier's house, and when he heard the invitation of the owner, he hobbled his horse, and crossed the grass plot to the cabin whose door stood hospitably open.

“Well come, James Robertson!” was Nolichucky Jack's greeting to his visitor. “Carter is coming over in a few minutes, and the three of us can have a good talk. In the meantime, I hope you do not mind the boys. This is the time of day when Joe and Jim feel they have a claim on Daddy.”

So, for twenty minutes, Sevier rolled over the floor with the two shrieking lads. First he was their horse, and they rode on his back until he bucked and sent them, gleeful, into a corner of the room. Then he was an Indian whom they managed to capture even as he was preparing to scalp them. And finally he was a bear who drove them to take refuge on the ladder which led to the bed in the attic. From where subdued laughter was heard long after the three men were seated before the fire.

“What a rascal that Cameron was!” Sevier began

the conversation. "Yet we must not lay on him all the blame for the attempt to bribe us. The scheme came from the brain of John Stuart, the British agent, his superior. I must say I do not fancy the way the English are doing things."

"Right!" Robertson agreed. "Yet I am not sure but the Englishman has done us a favor in trying to persuade us to buy his help. Never were threats so harmless as those he made to-day. It's a good thing we are not in Wake County, North Carolina, but in Washington District, west of the mountain barrier."

"When the settlers decided to name this section after George Washington they did better than they knew," was Sevier's comment. "How that man does like to plan for those whom Great Britain wishes to oppress! Mark my words, the day is coming when he will be far more than a colonel of the Virginia line."

"And Colonel Washington would agree with us that now is the time to keep this country. If we give up now, we might as well make up our minds to have no more freedom in life."

"Then we must arrange with the Indians to let us stay in the homes we have made here in the Watauga," John Carter declared.

"Yet how are we to do it?" Robertson asked, thoughtfully. "We must not forget that ten years ago

George III gave orders that no private person should buy lands from the Indians."

"Even when the Indians are willing to sell?" Carter asked.

"The King's decree is that, if any Indians are ready to sell their possessions, they must be bought for the King, and in the name of the King, at an assembly arranged for by the heads of a colony," Robertson continued his explanation.

"It looks as if we could do nothing, then," was the despairing word of Carter.

"No! We can do something, and still obey the King," Sevier rebuked the man who was ready to quit. "We may be forbidden to buy land, but nothing has been said about a lease. I suggest that we persuade the chiefs who to-day heard Cameron warn us from the Cherokee lands, to invite all the leaders of the tribe to come for a conference at Watauga Old Fields."

"But what if they refuse to listen to our proposals?" Once more Carter expressed his doubts.

"They will not refuse," Sevier replied. "If we once get them here I feel sure of the result; they will go away minus their lands, while we stay with the lease we want."

"Yet they know they will be asked to yield valuable country." Still Carter was not ready to give up his fears. "Do you realize that in asking them to meet

on Watauga Old Fields you are bringing them to country that was the possession of the predecessors of the Indians longer ago than we can tell? Graves and stone implements and other relics of days gone by are everywhere on the eight-mile length of the Fields. Wouldn't it be better to propose the lease at some point farther away from the reminders of the past? Why not go down on the Nolichucky?"

"No, I believe our best chance to deal with them is just where we live." James Robertson followed this declaration of his faith by the proposal that Sevier be asked to see the chiefs in the morning, and to arrange for the conference proposed.

Sevier's task was even easier than he had thought it would be. The chiefs listened gravely to his suggestion, then talked a few minutes among themselves.

"It is good!" was the laconic statement of their readiness to attend in force at the time and place appointed.

The boys of the settlement were all eagerness as they thought of the coming of the Indians.

"We don't need to be afraid of them this time, do we?" James Sevier asked his father.

"No, you won't need to hide from them, son. They are to come as our helpers. If we are friendly with them I am sure they will be friendly with us."

Yet the fathers and mothers were not so easy in

their minds as Jack Sevier's words to his son indicated. Thought of the presence of so many savages was disturbing.

"What if something goes wrong?" Robertson gave expression to the anxiety so keenly felt by all. "They may come with the best of intentions, but in an instant their attitude toward us may change. They can be changed from friends into enemies as quickly as powder will flash up when a spark is struck into it from the flint."

For the boys, however, there was no anticipation but of a holiday when wonderful things would be seen.

"Father says Atta-Culla-Culla is to be here," Joseph Sevier said, excitedly. "You know he is a sort of king. I wonder how he will look. Won't he have a wonderful headdress of eagles' feathers!"

"Father says he will be better to hear than to see," James Sevier put in. "They call him 'the man with the silver tongue,' because he knows how to speak. Wish we could understand all he says."

"Maybe the Indian words we have learned will help us," Henry Isbell suggested. "But I'm afraid they will talk so fast that we can't make out anything worth while."

"But we can look at them all," Landon Carter reminded them. "And they will be well worth seeing."

And the assembled Cherokee warriors did make a

spectacle which neither the boys nor their parents ever forgot. Six hundred Indians came, some of them from as far away as northern Georgia. All were keenly alert as they stood with folded arms or squatted on the ground. Atta-Culla-Culla was there, as the boys had hoped, and with him were Savanuca from Echota, Old Tassell, Noonday, and the Bloody Fellow. But above them all towered the dreaded Oconostota, the chief of chiefs, the warrior who had won a hundred fights. Eagles' feathers were everywhere, but some of the braves wore turkey's feathers, while others preferred coons' tails as ornaments for their heads. Their garments were a strange medley, for, to their own simple vesture of buckskin shirts, leggins and moccasins, were added in many instances tawdry ornaments secured at such trading stores as that kept by John Sevier at his home place on the Watauga.

In the presence of these lords of the soil were ninety to one hundred men from Carter's Station on the north, from the Nolichucky settlements on the south, and from the region of Chimney Top Mountain on the east, as well as from Watauga. Women and children were with their men folks. Even if it had been safe to leave them at home, no one wished to be left behind when such important things were to be done under the old oak-tree at Watauga Old Fields.

The boys and girls were soon making friends with the Indian children. They ran races together, they shot arrows at a mark, they compared their dogs, they rode on primitive conveyances made of long poles and drawn by dogs, they even ventured to take a place in a sack on a horse's back, balanced by a similar sack in which rode an Indian boy or girl.

But Joseph and James Sevier found their greatest pleasure in listening to a thirteen-year-old boy from the Indian village in Georgia called Echota. This boy, Sequoyah, was more quiet than some of his companions, and he preferred talking to playing. At first the white lads found difficulty in understanding the Cherokee tongue, but before the day was done they could understand most of what Sequoyah said. They were fascinated by his tales of the birds and the beasts, which he seemed to know so well. He told them many stories, but they liked best of all the story of "The Rabbit and the Tar Wolf."¹

"Once there was such a long spell of dry weather that there was no more water in the creeks and springs, and the animals held a council to see what to do about it. They decided to dig a well, and all agreed to help except the Rabbit, who was a lazy fellow, and said, 'I don't want to dig for water. The dew on the grass

¹ This story is printed in "Historic Sullivan," by Olive Taylor.

is enough for me.' The others did not like this, but they went to work together and dug the well.

"They noticed that the Rabbit kept sleek and lively, although it was still dry weather and the water was getting low in the well. They said, 'That tricky Rabbit steals our water at night.' So they made a wolf of pine gum and tar and set it up by the well to scare the thief. That night the Rabbit came, as he had been coming every night, to drink enough to last him all the next day. He saw the queer black thing by the well and said, 'Who's there?' But the tar wolf said nothing. The Rabbit came nearer, but the wolf did not move. So he grew braver and said, 'Get out of my way. I'll strike you.' Still the wolf did not move. The Rabbit came up and struck it with his paw. But the gum held his foot and he stuck fast. Now he was angry, and he said, 'Let me go or I'll kick you.' Still the wolf said nothing. Then the Rabbit struck again with his hind foot, so hard that it was caught in the gum and he could not move. And there he stuck until the animals came for water in the morning. When they found who the thief was they had great sport over him for a while. They then got ready to kill him. But as soon as he was unfastened from the tar wolf he got away."

While Sequoyah was telling tales to the enraptured Sevier boys, their father, with his neighbors, carried on the negotiations with the Cherokees. The settlers,

too, made a picturesque company, with their bearskin caps, their hunting shirts, and their rough homespun or buckskin trousers tucked into great boots.

By general consent, Robertson was the spokesman for the settlers, while Oconostota talked for the Indians. Sevier sat by Robertson's side, and advised with him, but when the older man urged him to do some of the talking he said that he thought it more fitting that a settler who had been longer on the ground than he should direct affairs.

"These are your lands," Robertson began, when the preliminary ceremonies had been concluded. "We have come to live on them. But we do not wish to do so without your leave. And we do not think of asking you to give us something for nothing. You like this country, and so do we. You have come here to hunt, but you can find much good hunting ground on other rivers. We, too, could go somewhere else, but we like living here, and we won't go if you do not ask too hard a bargain."

"What does the White Chief suggest?" Oconostota asked, after conferring with other chiefs about the council fire.

"If you will let us live freely for ten years on all the lands on the Watauga and its tributaries, we shall be glad to pay you in good powder, lead, and muskets, as well as cotton goods and other things you can wear,

six thousand dollars. We know that you would probably let us have the lease we seek for less than this, but your white brothers wish to give you all that they can, that you may be happy in making us happy."

Once more Oconostota turned to the chiefs at his side. It was evident that, while some were in favor of accepting the proposal, others were urging that there be a dicker for more favorable terms. The conversation was carried on in low tones, but Robertson and Sevier could tell who were the unsatisfied men, by the sparkle in their greedy eyes; evidently they were thinking of the joy of taking to their wigwams a larger quantity of trading goods from the stores than they had ever possessed.

At length, when all questions had been silenced, Oconostota turned to Robertson.

"The White Brother's words are good. The muskets and the lead, the powder and the cotton goods will be received. But we do not wish to give up our lands for ten years. That is too long. Let the terms be eight years, and we are ready to do as you say."

Then came a brief conference among the settlers. Robertson and Sevier advised that Oconostota's proposal be accepted at once. When the information had been given to Oconostota, and by him to the other chiefs, all made ready to sign the paper which had been

drawn up already by Sevier, as soon as the change in the terms of the lease was made.

There was no delay in making the payment when the paper had been signed, for there were goods sufficient in the trading store to take care even of the large demand made by the eager sellers of the lease. How they trooped into the store, and what a spectacle they made as they emerged with their loads of ammunition and trinkets!

The settlers breathed more freely. Surely, they felt, there could be no further danger of a clash with their red-skinned guests.

“But we must keep our eyes open for a few days yet,” Sevier said to Robertson. “Until they are all well on their way home we cannot feel absolutely secure.”

Of course the settlers would have preferred to send the Indians away at once. But they knew that after a council, the men of the forest expected a few days of feasting, drinking, and merrymaking. So they were entertained with barbecues, foot-races, horse-racing, games of ball, and contests in marksmanship.

As the days passed it was evident that the Indians had no evil designs on their hosts. “To-morrow they will be going,” Robertson declared with satisfaction to several of his neighbors, “and we can return to our plantations.”

But that last day brought disaster. A farewell foot-

race had been arranged between the white young men and Indians of about the same age. Their progress along the course of the Watauga was watched with satisfaction by men and women and children whose brothers and sons were in the contest. Parents among the settlers and Cherokee chiefs alike shouted approval of the efforts made by the racers.

Then, in an instant, all gayety was gone. The sharp crack of a musket shot was followed by the death cry of one of the Indian racers.

While some gathered about the fallen brave, others rushed into the forest from which the fatal shot had come, but they were unable to discover any trace of the villain by whose act the peace of the Watauga settlements was threatened. Not until some time later was it known that the guilty man came from a few miles northeast of the Shelby home, just over the Virginia line. When he learned of the gathering of the Cherokees at Watauga he stole upon them, intent on revenging the death of a brother, a companion of Daniel Boone, who had been killed in Kentucky. He did not stop to reason that the culprits were Shawnees, and that the death of a Cherokee in reprisal was unreasonable. Vengeance does not reason; to the man from Virginia an Indian was an Indian.

In vain both Robertson and Sevier tried to pacify the Indians who had come to them without thought of

war. They were compelled to stand idly by as the six hundred Indians, in sullen silence, stole away to their homes, taking with them the goods for which they had sold the right to remain on their fertile river lands.

"I like not this silence," Sevier commented to Robertson and Carter. "Did you see the flash of the eye of Oconostota, and the black looks of Atta-Culla-Culla? We must be on our guard. Soon they will return, not for peace, but for war."

"I fear me there will be much sorrow because of this day," Zachariah Isbell said with shaking head. "Who can blame them if they seek vengeance? Always they would seek to wipe out in blood the death of one of their braves even if this occurs in an ordinary manner. But this happened when they were our guests."

"We must do something to keep them from a descent on our little fort," Sevier gave utterance to the thought of all the leaders. "For a moment I thought we ought to follow their retreating company, and patch matters up. But there is a better way. Let me go down into the Cherokee country, visit their chiefs in their villages, and do what I can to make them see how blameless and how sorry we are."

"That is what ought to be done, Sevier," Robertson agreed. "But you must let me go on that difficult errand. No one could do the work better than you; perhaps no one so well. But I am an older man, and my

responsibilities are greater because I have lived here longer. I must go. Do you stay here and guard the settlements against attacks which may come when I am gone."

Sevier was compelled to agree to Robertson's proposal. But he urged that their messenger to the Indian stronghold should not go alone. "You ought to have a body-guard. Take two or three men with you, Robertson."

"Would you consent to take such a guard, Sevier?" was the quiet response. "No, I know you would not. You can see how much better is the chance of success if I go alone into the presence of Oconostota and his people. Then every available man is needed with you here; in case of attack the lives of all might depend on one more defender."

Arrangements were soon made in accordance with Robertson's suggestion. Two days after the departure of the Indians he rode away into the forest, on his errand to save his neighbors.

"There goes a brave man!" was Sevier's comment, as Robertson disappeared. "We can never forget his eagerness to risk himself to save five hundred other lives."

With great caution, yet in haste, Robertson continued his journey. He knew that he had to ride for one hundred and fifty miles, through the heart of the

enemy's country, along the Little Tennessee, and across the border into Georgia. He was aware that at any moment he might fall a victim to some savage, lurking behind a tree, or stretched out in the leaves above his head. But he did not falter.

His path was rough, but he had no difficulty in choosing his way. Not only was it marked for him by the passage of generations of Indians who had followed the great war-path from Georgia into Virginia, but it was made still more unmistakable by the traces left by the hundreds of angry Cherokees in their passage from the Watauga to their home.

He had been on his way more than a day when he saw an armed man approaching. He was preparing to defend himself when he recognized an Indian trader named Isaac Thomas, who lived at Echota, one of the Indian towns in Georgia.

"I come from Nancy Ward, the prophetess," Thomas explained. "You know she is the friend of the settlers. As soon as she learned of the threats against Watauga she sent me to tell you to make ready for the coming of her people."

"Thank you for your trouble, Thomas," was Robertson's response to the trader's explanation. "But I wonder if you cannot do greater service to our people by returning with me to the Cherokee villages than by going on to Watauga. They are on their guard.

Under Sevier's guidance they will be ready for anything that may come."

Together, then, the two men rode on into the forest, until they came to the neighborhood of Echota. There they encountered a young brave, Attusah, whom Thomas knew.

"Won't you go to Oconostota at Echota, telling him that his friend, James Robertson, is coming to see him?" Thomas asked the Indian. "Tell him that you come from Thomas. Then, if he is willing to see Robertson, come back to us here. We shall wait for you."

Anxiously they awaited the return of their messenger. The pleasure of Robertson may be imagined, then, when the word was brought:

"The chief of the palefaces is welcome. To-morrow Oconostota will be with the great council of the Cherokees, and Robertson can see them all together."

After a night spent in the log cabin of Thomas, who lived alone, Robertson waited for the summons to the council. As he sat in the doorway he saw scores and hundreds of Indians from the neighborhood passing on their way to the council-house.

"They are all ready for the war-path, Thomas!" the man from Watauga said, with shaking head. "See their painted faces, and their black looks! I fear for the future. But I must do my best for my people."

"You will soon have your chance to see what you can do," Thomas replied, as he saw a young Indian leave the road and approach the house. "I think this is a messenger from Oconostota."

So it proved. Briefly but imperiously the Indian performed his errand:

"Oconostota bids you come to the council. He sits in the midst of the warriors of the Cherokees."

The young Indian soon lead Robertson into the council-house. Perhaps sixty of the leaders of the Cherokees were present. Most of them had less prominent places, as fitted their rank. But in the centre of the room were ten or twelve greater men on whom, Robertson realized at once, rested his fate and that of his friends. His heart sank as he recognized among them the notorious Dragging Canoe, who was known to be an implacable foe of the settlers. The conference at Watauga had been held against his wishes; he had no desire to lease lands to the white men, but was eager to drive them from the borders of the Indians.

So one man stood alone, among scores of sullen, scowling chiefs, picked men of the Cherokees, tall, sturdy, determined looking. Robertson was unarmed, except for the will to do his best and, if necessary, to die in the attempt to help his neighbors.

The height of the man who thus stood alone and unafraid before the council drew from more than one

an expression of admiration. As brave men, Indians can appreciate bravery in others. Robertson's battle was more than half won before he spoke a word.

The first message came, of course, from Oconostota.

"You are welcome to Echota. You may speak freely to us, for we are ready to hear your words."

Robertson, who had listened standing to the invitation of the chief, plunged at once into his message:

"I come to you as one of your hosts at the council called by us, where you were so sorely used. Instead of the security which was your right as our guests, there was death for one of your young men who, I am told, belonged to the family of one of your chiefs. You do well to be angry. We, your hosts, are grieved. We are trying to find the man who did the awful act. He was not one of us, but came from far away. He will be found, and he will be punished. But our grief that you have been treated so will last for many moons. It cannot be taken away by the punishment of the murderer or by your readiness to hold our hands in friendship.

"Friendship is what we seek. We came as friends of the noble Cherokees, and if we can continue to be their friends we shall be glad."

At first Robertson's words seemed to fall on ears that were closed to all appeals. But the chiefs liked the

way he spoke, and when he bowed, and stepped back from the place of prominence he had held while he spoke, Oconostota began a brief conference with those about him.

“The words of our White Brother are good. Shall we send by him a message of friendship to his people?”

No one ventured to disagree with the judgment of the great chief. Dragging Canoe remained silent; he did not think the time had come to speak the hatred in his heart. Grimly he watched the chiefs gather about Robertson, take his hand, and give him messages of renewed friendship for the people of Watauga.

Of course Robertson wished to return at once to those who had sent him on his errand. He knew they would be anxious about him and about their own future. But he knew that it was wiser to accept the invitation of Oconostota to spend a few days in Echota as his guest. It was more important to cement the new friendship than to relieve the anxiety of the Wataugans.

At last, however, he was free to go. Then how quickly, and with what a light heart, he retraced the route he had travelled so short a time before!

Sevier was watching for him. When he was yet a long way off, the man who had been left in charge of the settlers rode out to meet him. As he came near, Robertson raised his hat and shouted:

“It’s all right! There will be no attack.”

There was joy that night in Watauga as the good news was carried from cabin to cabin.

"We knew that with Sevier here to lead, one hundred of us could have held out against Oconostota and his men, even if there had been twelve hundred of them," John Carter gave expression to the confidence of the community. "You should have seen the way he arranged for the defense. He is a marvel. He has organized a military company. We wanted to make him captain. But he is too modest."

"No, Robertson must be captain," Sevier insisted. "I'll be lieutenant, if you want me for the place, for it will give me joy to serve under a man like James Robertson, in the defense of such a noble band as that at Watauga."

Everybody sat up late that night, there was so much to talk about. Various opinions were expressed on different subjects, but all were agreed in the thought expressed by John Carter:

"In Robertson and Sevier we have the greatest men on the frontier. Now we know that there is a wonderful future before this community. The day is not far distant when, instead of hundreds, there will be thousands to recognize their greatness, and to pave the way for a new state west of the Blue Ridge."

CHAPTER VII

VICTORY AND DEFEAT

“NOLICHUCKY JACK said it!”

That was the reply of Oconostota to some of his young men who told him of raids on the property of the Indians by unknown enemies.

“Our friends on the Watauga are not guilty,” the old chief insisted. “The bad men are not on Watauga. They hide in the forest and steal from the white men as they steal from us.”

“You know?” one of the complaining braves asked, doubtfully.

“I know,” was the positive reply of the sturdy leader of the Cherokees. “Nolichucky Jack said it, and I believe him.”

Oconostota held to his belief in the honor of the settlers, in the face of all efforts to make him take the war-path against the men to whom his people had leased the fair lands on the Watauga. Dragging Canoe, a chief of the Chickamaugas, a branch of the Cherokees, who lived to the south, on the banks of the Tennessee River, longed to see the Indians rise and wipe out Robertson and Sevier and all their neighbors, but all he could say was in vain.

Oconostota was right. The desperadoes who troubled the Indians disturbed the peace of the settlers as well. They were continually hearing of some fresh evil worked by the outlaws who cared for nothing but their own profit.

One morning a man named Jim Moore came into the settlement with a tale of outrage.

"I wasn't harming nobody," he began his story. "I had lighted from my horse and was watching a big old rattlesnake, quiled up and singing the prettiest you ever heerd, when I was grabbed by a man who tuck his knife and cut off this year." He pointed to his mutilated head. "And now I'm in a fix. I don't mind the year so much—though that's bad enough—but I do mind going about like a horse-thief. It fears me that when folks see me, they will think I'm a bad man."

"We must take care of that," Jack Sevier said. "Suppose we give you a paper telling just how you lost your ear. Then no one can say that you were punished for horse-theft."

The sorrows of the man who had fallen among thieves were forgotten the very next day by reason of the arrival of Daniel Boone, with a terrified company of men, women and children, the remnant of a party which he had led westward from the Watauga settlement in the fall of 1773.

"You ought to hear the story Boone norated!"

John Carter said to Jack Sevier, who was down on the Nolichucky River when the refugees came to the Watauga.

“He felt safe, for he had about eighty people in the party, including forty armed hunters. When well on their way to Cumberland Gap they were passing through a deep valley, with mountains all about them, when a large company of Indians fired on them from ambush. Among those who fell was Boone’s own son. Those who were left alive did not think they were safe in going on, so they are here again.”

“And here they are welcome, so long as they wish to stay!” Sevier said, as he heard the story.

“I can’t stay long,” was Boone’s response to the hearty invitation to abide where he was. “I aim to help the folks in Kaintuck against the red devils, who have been stirred up against them. There’s likely to be trouble for a long time, for Chief Logan has been persuading the Indians to come down from the north, and drive out the settlers who are squatting on what they say are their old hunting grounds.

“Ef I can be of any use to you folks, as you arm against what may come to ye, count on me.”

The sturdy settlers were not dismayed as they heard Boone’s narrative, although they knew that, unless the Indians were halted on their way, nothing could save Watauga from a desperate encounter.

"We must go West!" Robertson and Sevier agreed. "And we must take with us all the brave men who are willing to go to what may be their death."

Soon Governor Dunmore knew of the trouble in the western part of Virginia's territory, and he called on the troops of the Virginia line to go to the frontier.

"So we must join them," Isaac Shelby said at once. "We are still in the Virginia militia, even if we are in North Carolina. "How many men do you think we can muster, Robertson?"

"I fear there will not be large response to our appeal," was the reply, "but we need every man who can carry a rifle."

Robertson was agreeably surprised when he saw how many responded to the call to arms. For that call was made by Jack Sevier, and already the men had learned to go where Nolichucky Jack led the way. There were volunteers sufficient for Sevier's own company, as well as for Evan Shelby, and his son Isaac. James Robertson and Valentine Sevier served as junior officers under Isaac Shelby.

"But how can we go to war without supplies?" Robertson asked. "Virginia needs us, but Virginia has not sent the things we must have for the long journey."

"Let us take care of these needs this time," Sevier volunteered. "I have enough for all."

"Think twice, man, before you decide to spend so much of your fortune as will be needed," Robertson warned the generous leader. "It may be a long time until you are repaid by the government."

"What matter?" was the reply. "Of what use would my property be to me if the savages are not driven back?"

"It's a long way to go until we meet the Virginia troops," one of the recruits said, as if regretting his enlistment. "But we're not afeared of the way or of what is at the end of it!"

The cheerful assurance of Jack Sevier was contagious. As the men heard him, and looked into his strong face, there was an end of holding back; they were as eager for the fray as was their commander.

The journey of twenty-five weary days proved even harder than was anticipated, but the sight of their commander's face put heart into every man in the company. As they rode through deep, dark gorges or floundered in the mud by the rivers, they forgot to grumble. For always ahead of them was the leader in whom they had all confidence.

"There goes Nolichucky Jack—God bless him!" More than once the cry was a spur to flagging spirits.

At night, when the men were in their rough camp, Sevier was never too weary to help his associates. After he had completed his patient care of the horse which

had carried him safely over the rough going of another day, he set himself to cheer the men. He told stories by the camp fire, and he was not averse to taking part in the rough banter which followed.

"Isn't he a natural antic?" one of Sevier's men said, with admiration, as he watched Captain Sevier leading his friends in their moments of relaxation.

At last they joined the Virginia troops, near the point where the Kanawha River empties into the Ohio. After an evening of good fellowship, all were sleeping, unconscious of the sinister army of fifteen hundred Indians, Shawnees, Delawares, and Mingoes, who were so close to them. Chief Cornstalk had led them successfully until they were almost upon the sleeping Virginians.

They might have succeeded in surprising and annihilating the company, but James Robertson and Valentine Sevier rose early that morning.

"Let's go out to perch a turkey for breakfast!" Valentine proposed. Robertson agreed, and they were soon on the errand which saved the day for the gallant little army.

But the turkey they pursued was forgotten when their practised ears detected the movements of a body of men.

"Indians!" the brave soldiers whispered, together.

At once they were alert. They realized that the lives of their comrades were in their keeping.

"There are five acres of Indians within a mile of us!" Sevier announced, after cautious scouting.

"They must not reach the men and find them asleep!" Robertson said.

So, without giving a thought to their own danger, they fired their rifles. "They will take alarm at the camp," was Valentine's comment, as he reloaded his rifle. "But we must hurry to them. They must know what we have seen."

So it came about that when the Indians reached the vicinity of the camp the drums had already beaten to arms, the volunteer fighters had rolled out of their blankets, and they were in battle array.

Then began what has been called the most fiercely contested Indian conflict ever fought on this continent. The battle line of the Indians was more than a mile long. From morning until night the fierce men faced each other. Now the Indians had the advantage; again the settlers were in the lead. The cry of Cornstalk, "Press forward!" was answered by the call of Sevier, "There they are! At them, boys!" The Virginians were brave, but it was given to the tall Watauga boys to finish the battle, as they had begun it. For the wily Indians were outflanked by the still more wily pioneers.

"What do you think of a flank movement,

Shelby?" Nolichucky Jack sent word to his friend, who, by the death of his superior, had succeeded to command of his company.

"Good" the reply was sent promptly. "You'll hear from us in the rear."

With several hundred men, Shelby stole along the bank of the Kanawha until he was in the rear of the Indians. When they discovered that they were beset behind and before, they fled in disorder, leaving scores of dead on the field. The loss of the little white band was seventy-five dead and one hundred and forty wounded.

Thus the efforts of the savages—encouraged by the British, who were not ashamed to own that they were calling on the Indians to war against the settlers—were unavailing, and the Wataugans could return home in the assurance that, for the present, at least, their families were safe.

When the victorious settlers were back at their homes, Sevier, Henderson, Robertson, and Boone had many talks about the Indian lands.

"We must have the Kaintuck country," Henderson and Boone agreed. "There are millions of acres there which are useful only as hunting grounds for the Cherokees from the south and the Six Nations from the north. The Six Nations have no real place there, for they have signed away their rights to King George.

Maybe we can persuade the Cherokees to sell us their claim to the whole territory."

"And if we are right clever folks we might at the same time talk them into selling us the lands on the Watauga, the Holston and the Nolichucky which they have leased to us." Sevier looked at Robertson for approval.

"We have been told that we must not buy land from the Indians," was Robertson's comment. "But what are we to do? North Carolina, which claims us, lets us alone. Virginia says we do not belong to her. The British are doing all they can to stir up the Indians against us. Why shouldn't we do the best we can for ourselves?"

"But do you think the Cherokees will sell?" Boone asked, anxiously.

"They will if we tempt them by the sight of gauds and baubles which we must have here to show them when they come to the council." As Sevier made the reply, he smiled; he was thinking of the days when he learned what pleased the Indians. He would appeal to them with goods of the kind that were responsible for the raid on his New Market store which led to his first contest with the savages.

"Will you go to Richmond to buy what we need?" Henderson asked Sevier. "You won't need any instruction from us."

So Jack Sevier crossed the mountains once more, driving pack animals before him and guiding teamsters. And in a few weeks he was back on the Watauga with a most irresistible collection for the eyes of those who were to be asked to the council.

Invitations were broadcasted in the late winter, and on the appointed day, March 17, 1775, about twelve hundred Indians gathered at Sycamore Shoals. Two hundred and fifty settlers who tried to be careless, though they were really most anxious, came to meet them. When the women and children were counted in, there were nearly two thousand people in and about the old Watauga Fort.

Again there was feasting and dancing for the adults, while the boys and girls from the wigwams played games with the boys and girls from the cabins. Jack Sevier's boys looked eagerly among their dusky playmates for Sequoyah, the boy who had told them the story, "The Rabbit and the Tar Wolf."

"Do you think he will tell us another story?" James asked his brother.

"We can ask him!"

When Sequoyah was found, he was quite willing to talk to an absorbed audience of scores of boys and girls. On this occasion he told "How the Partridge Got His Whistle."¹

¹ From "Historic Sullivan," by Olive Taylor.

“ In the old days the Terrapin had a fine whistle, but the Partridge had none. The Terrapin was constantly going about whistling and showing his whistle to the other animals until the Partridge became jealous, so one day, when they met, the Partridge asked leave to try it. The Terrapin was afraid to risk it at first, suspecting some trick, but the Partridge said, ‘ I’ll give it back right away, and if you are afraid you can stay with me while I practise.’ So the Terrapin let him have the whistle, and the Partridge walked around blowing on it in fine fashion. ‘ How does it sound with me?’ asked the Partridge. ‘ O you do very well,’ said the Terrapin, walking along. ‘ Now, how do you like it,’ asked the Partridge, running ahead and whistling a little faster. ‘ That’s fine,’ answered the Terrapin, hurrying to keep up, ‘ but don’t run so fast.’ ‘ And now, how do you like this?’ called the Partridge. With that he spread his wings, gave one long whistle, and flew to the top of a tree, leaving the poor Terrapin to look after him from the ground. The Terrapin never recovered his whistle, and from that, and the loss of his scalp, which the Turkey stole from him, he grew ashamed to be seen, and ever since he shuts himself up in his box when anyone comes near him.”

There was no time for another story, for both Sequoyah and the Sevier boys were anxious to see what was going on where the Indians were looking

with hungry eyes at the trade goods the settlers were so anxious they should value more than their lands.

"We want!" Chief Atta-Culla-Culla said. "They may have our hunting grounds."

But old Oconostota was not so eager to trade. He shook his head, and spoke discouragingly.

"I see how we have become less, and the white man has become many," he began. "There were as many of us as six hundred braves could count on all their fingers, and there was a town for every ten of these six hundred braves. Then the paleface came. They asked for land. We gave them land. They asked for more land. We gave them more land. Now they push us back, back, back. We came over the mountains. They came over the mountains. They want us to go back, more back. When will the end come? When our braves are sent far away to the setting sun. Then our spirits will be like water. Then our hearts will be weak. Now we can stop them. We want our hunting grounds for ourselves. I do not see what the paleface offers us, but I see our fields and forests. They must be ours till many suns shall set. Who will see what I see, and do what I do? This is my mind. I have spoken."

But when Oconostota took his seat, there was a murmur of dissent. Several chiefs tried to speak. One of them made himself heard.

“We do not want the land, for we cannot hold it. Braves of the Delawares and the Shawnees come down from the north, and when our people go there they drive them out or scalp them. Why not give the land we only call our own for these things that we can have and keep?”

The murmur of approval was even greater than the sound of dissent that followed Oconostota's talk. And soon the agreement was made.

“Now it is our turn,” Sevier said to Robertson. “Let us talk to them while they are in the humor to trade.”

Again Oconostota's warnings were ineffective, and Sevier and his friends became the owners of their homes for goods worth less than ten thousand dollars. To the deed were signed many curious names. Oconostota of Echota was on the paper, as well as Waightstill Avery, Raystach, or the Old Tassel, Savanuken, or The Raven, Willanakaw of Toque, Attusah, the Northward Warrior, Doskuah of Abram, Ralluch, or The Raven, Toostooch, Amoyah, The Pigeon, Oostosetti, or The Mankiller, Tillahaweh, or The Chestnut, Anna-ke-hu-gah, or the Girl, Atta-Culla-Culla, or The Carpenter, Ookooneekah, or The White Owl, Tuska-gah, or The Terrapin, Kataquilla, or Pot Clay.

All these signed by making their marks.

"We have a bargain," Jack Sevier said to Robertson. "Now if only we can keep what we have secured."

"That will not be easy," was the discouraging response. "The royal governor will be against us. Then I fear troubles with the Indians have just begun. Do you remember how Oconostota looked when he said, 'We have sold you a fine territory, but I fear you will have some difficulty in getting it settled?' Does the old fox mean that he will see that our way is made hard for us?"

Robertson's fears were soon realized. For a few weeks later Jack Sevier came to his cabin to tell sad news.

"See the proclamation from Governor Martin!" he shouted. "He says that our treaty is against the law; that our lands are not ours. So much for the British care of our settlement. Now wait until the Cherokees learn about this! Oconostota will be triumphant."

CHAPTER VIII

FIGHTING FOR LIBERTY

“OUR country will be free! Blood has been shed in Massachusetts!”

Breathlessly, Jack Sevier gave the glorious news from Concord and Lexington to a few of his neighbors assembled in the fortress home of James Robertson one evening perhaps two months after the treaty with the Cherokees by which title to the homes of the Watauga pioneers was transferred to the hardy Colonists.

“The news has just come by the mouth of a trapper who came in from the Susquehanna country,” Sevier explained further, when he had caught his breath.

“We must help them!” John Carter expressed the thought of all the men present.

Before they went to their homes they had made their plans. They would form a company of riflemen, and would offer themselves for service beyond the mountains.

“But what is it all about?” one cautious man asked next morning, when he was told of the company. “They talk of taxes and stamps and British officers. Those things do not bother us here.”

"We are free men here in the mountains," Robertson agreed. "But we, too, have a grievance against Great Britain. Think of the way the Indians are being stirred up against us. Surely that is reason enough for fighting."

"Liberty is reason enough!" Sevier declared. "You say we are free here in the mountains? Let us fight that we may stay free. And let us fight that men who know what it is to be taxed and burdened may have the liberty we value so highly."

As usual, Sevier's ideas were warmly applauded. Before night every man who could possibly serve enlisted to go wherever he might be needed. No question as to equipment or support bothered them, for Sevier said he would be responsible for the costs; he felt that North Carolina would repay him.

"You have a good deal of faith in North Carolina!" was John Carter's comment. "Years have passed without a sign of their desire to help us. Just the same, I agree that we must do all we can for the people east of the mountains. They are our brothers, and we will stand by them."

"Then let us begin by asking the legislature of the patriots at Halifax to take us under their care as a part of the Colony!" was Sevier's next proposal.

"You write the paper, and we all will sign it!"

The approval of this suggestion made by Robertson was unanimous.

The paper Sevier prepared said that the Wataugans wished to aid in "the present unhappy contest." If they were annexed to North Carolina, every individual of the one hundred and fourteen able-bodied residents of the Watauga District, including "the rivers Wataugah, Nonachuckee, etc," would devote everything to the cause of liberty.

But for one thing these western riflemen might at once have seen service east of the mountains. What interfered was the deliberate plan of British leaders to stir up the Indians against the "back and defenseless parts of Virginia and Carolina."

"That is why the Cherokees are rising against us!" Sevier told his comrades. "There is work for us to do nearer home. Unless we hold back the Indians, our own homes will be lost, and the cause of liberty in the Colonies will be in danger."

The first warning came through Isaac Thomas, the trader, whose headquarters were in Echota, the Cherokee town—the same Thomas who once before had proved himself a friend to the Watauga settlers.

"Look out for trouble from Oconostota!" Thomas wrote, through trusty messengers. "A British agent has been stirring up the Cherokees against you. He tells them that now is the time to get rich plunder from

you, and to regain their hunting grounds on which you are living. Dragging Canoe and the Chickamaugas will help Oconostota and the Cherokees."

At once the settlers prepared for trouble. The fort at Watauga, which was named Fort Lee, was put in order, and defenses were built in a number of places. Chief among them, Fort Patrick Henry was located near the junction of the North Holston and the South Holston.

"For the care of these forts we must count on every man over sixteen years of age!" Sevier sent word among the aroused Colonists. Then he saw that all were equipped with the Deckard rifle, which was so deadly at long range in the hands of sharpshooters like Sevier's men.

"Our force may be small," Robertson said to Evan Shelby, who commanded another fort at Sapling Grove. "But two hundred men, with Jack Sevier as their leader, each of them armed with a rifle whose barrel is thirty inches long, and grows out of a stock nearly four feet long, is a force that even a thousand Creeks and Cherokees may well fear."

Anxious weeks passed. Then came a second message from Thomas at Echota. He told of Nancy Ward, the prophetess of the Cherokees, who already had proved that she was fond of the palefaces.

"Send my white brothers word to be ready," was

her urgent plea. "The bolt will fall very soon, and at midnight. Let them be well prepared."

With the utmost vigilance the frontiersmen watched. But nothing happened. The delay gave Sevier opportunity to send to the Virginia border for lead and powder. He could not secure as much as he wanted; he had to be content with two hundred pounds.

During the days of waiting, Sevier decided to go on a scouting expedition into the heart of the Cherokee territory. He saw no signs of trouble until one evening when he came upon a scene that he never forgot. At once he realized the danger of remaining where he was, but he was so fascinated by what was going on before his eyes that he remained for hours in his hiding place.

In a clearing in the forest the Cherokees had set up a great red post. About this post danced scores of braves, in full war array, to the music of drums and rattles, and the accompaniment of a wild chant. Suddenly the music ceased as a warrior advanced, and struck the post with his war club. Then he recounted his deeds of valor. All listened, and when he had finished they applauded. The music sounded once more, until another warrior struck the post, and began to tell of his martial achievements. Thus the programme continued far into the night, until excitement was at

fever heat, and the Cherokees showed their eagerness to set off on the war-path.

Sevier realized that he was looking on the striking of the war post, which was not only designed to arouse the warriors themselves, but to make the boys who listened eager for the day when they could join in the manly hunt for plunder and scalps.

“Be ready, men!” Sevier passed the word of warning when he returned to Fort Lee, where he was in command.

They had not long to wait. At midnight, July 7, 1776, Nancy Ward went to the cabin of Isaac Thomas at Echota.

“Go!” she said. “Tell my white brothers that the time has come.”

With several companions Thomas managed to reach Fort Lee. There his message to Sevier led that dauntless man to send a letter to the Virginia Committee of Safety:

“Four men have this moment come in, by making their escape from the Indians. They say six hundred Indians and whites were to start for the fort and intend to drive the country up to New River before they return.”

After giving their warning to the men to the north, Sevier set himself bravely to the task of holding the

fort, with its forty defenders, against six hundred fierce savages and their allies.

But he was not afraid. Nor were his men.

“Why should we be scared?” one of them said to his comrade. “Jack Sevier is our leader!”

Thus forty brave men on the Watauga grimly watched for the coming of their savage foes. Yet they were doomed to wait until the one hundred and seventy men at Fort Patrick Henry, on the Holston, had their innings. So Sevier was not the first commander under fire. Nevertheless his wise counsel had much to do with the success of the six captains on the Holston. For when scouts brought to the fort word that the Indians were only twenty miles away, and would soon make an attack, one of the commanders suggested that it might be wise to return into the fort and there await the foe. But James Shelby, Isaac Shelby's younger brother, felt that this would not be wise.

“Let us do what Jack Sevier would do if he were here—go out into the open, there receive the attack, and there win the victory. Jack believes in facing the savages where he can have room for attack as well as defense.”

“I like that plan,” James Robertson agreed. “If we retire into the fort, the Indians will be free to go over the border into Virginia, where we have sent the

women and children. Let's save them from a horrible death by facing the foe and turning them back in time."

All powerful even in absence, Sevier thus determined the manner of meeting the enemy. Persuaded by the reference to Nolichucky Jack, the bold Holston men marched out from the fort, at daybreak. For a time no enemy showed himself, but suddenly a party of about twenty Indians appeared. At sight of the white men the Indians wheeled their horses and disappeared. Of course they were followed, but they managed to keep out of the way of the pursuer. Finally, when dusk was approaching, and the country was becoming rougher, Shelby asked the leaders to pause for a conference.

"As the man who proposed that we come out to seek the Indians, I wish to be the first to suggest that we go back to the fort. I fear an ambush in the rough country. Probably those fleeing Indians were mere decoys, to entice us into a region where the new war party would have little difficulty in cutting us to pieces."

Once more his sagacious advice prevailed, though the men were loath to go back. The party was soon in more open country. Then there was a rush behind them, and they turned to confront the Indians who, disappointed in their effort to draw them into an ambush, pursued them into the open, the very place which

Shelby and his men would have chosen to meet the onset.

“Come on, scalp the palefaces!” shouted Dragging Canoe, the leader of the party.

The fierce rush of the Chickamaugas threw the whites into confusion. For a moment it looked like an Indian victory. No one knew what to do, until Isaac Shelby assumed the command which would have belonged to others if they had been equal to the task.

“At them, men! For the honor of our wives, and the love of our children!”

The disordered ranks of the settlers hesitated, then turned and rallied around Shelby.

“You would think it was Jack Sevier calling us!” a man said to his neighbor. “We can’t disregard that summons.”

At first there were only five men who faced the Indians. Five Indians attacked them. Their companions looked on in amazement and admiration.

While the brave heroes proved their superiority to the Indians who faced them, the remainder of the one hundred and seventy men were taking their places in battle array.

The contest was fierce, but in a little while Dragging Canoe called on the Indians to retreat. Yet not all of his men went with him; forty of them would never fight again. When the settlers looked over the

field, they found that their only loss was four men badly wounded.

"Now let's send word to Jack Sevier at Fort Lee!" Shelby proposed.

"Complete victory at Fort Patrick Henry!" was the word that went to the defenders at the fort on the Watauga. "Dragging Canoe in full retreat!"

"A great day's work in the woods!" Sevier, always generous, said when he heard the message. Then he turned his thoughts to meet the attack, which, he felt sure, could not be delayed much longer. Scouts had brought word that Oconostota, with three hundred and fifty Cherokees, was approaching along the Nolichucky. Yet for some reason, he did not appear before the fort.

"Probably Oconostota is waiting for Dragging Canoe to rally his men and come to his support," suggested one of the men.

Others thought the speaker was correct. So they relaxed their vigilance. Many of the men went out to the fields, while some of the women were washing clothes in a creek that entered the Watauga near the fort.

Suddenly the savages burst out of the forest, shouting their blood curdling war-whoop. What a scurrying for the fort followed! The men managed to reach shelter. The women, too, got inside the gates—all but twenty-year-old Catherine Sherrill, a leader among

the young people, not only by reason of her beauty of face, but because of her delightful ways.

The Indians rushed after her. With a gleeful shout of triumph one of them reached out to grasp her, but a ball from Jack Sevier's Deckard laid him low. Then he tried to open the gate of the stockade that she might enter, but others held him back.

"It is too bad to see her perish. But wouldn't the sacrifice of her life be better than the death of all in the fort at the cruel hands of the savages who probably would enter with her?" James Robertson asked.

Thus the gate remained shut in the face of the endangered maiden. What could she do? Once more the Indians reached out to take her—but she eluded their grasp and leaped to the top of the eight-foot stockade. She was an athletic young woman, yet how she managed to reach the top of the defence is unexplainable. Sevier did not stop to ask how she had managed the leap; he saw her poised a moment at the top. Then he held out his arms, and she jumped down to him.

"Bonnie Kate!" he said, as he set her down on the ground, in the midst of the excited men and women. "You are a brave girl for a foot-race."

The time was coming soon when Bonnie Kate would become Sevier's wife. The mother of his sons had died soon after the victory over the Indians at Point Pleasant.

There was no time that day to think of what might follow Catherine's exploit. For the defenders of the fort were too busy holding off the besiegers, who poured in a withering fire upon them for more than an hour. Fortunately their bullets did no harm.

But great havoc was wrought among the Indians by the fire of those who listened to Sevier's quiet counsel, "Wait till you are sure of your man; don't waste your powder."

At intervals the Indians renewed the attack throughout the day, then for many days. Twenty days in all they besieged the fort, but without success, though they were reënforced by Dragging Canoe and the Indians who had survived the attack on the men of Fort Patrick Henry. Discouraged, Oconostota led his Indians away during the night. When morning came there was not a sign of danger.

Dragging Canoe, angered by the resistance of the settlers, by the bitter defeat of his braves, and by a severe wound he had received in the initial contest, resolved to make two captives he had taken pay for the success of the hardy men of Watauga. One of these was a boy, who had been taken one day when he had ventured from the fort during a lull in the fighting. He was burned at the stake. The second captive was a woman, Mrs. Bean, a friend of the Indians, many of whom she had entertained. Instead of fleeing to the

fort, she had remained at home, in her certainty that her friends the Indians would do her no harm. Oconostota promised to take care of her, but, as soon as the old chief's back was turned, Dragging Canoe said he would burn her at the stake. She was securely fastened, and the dry wood about her feet was about to be fired, when Nancy Ward, the prophetess, friend of the settlers, but feared by the Indians, threw her protecting arms about the intended victim and defied Dragging Canoe to light the fagots.

"Now loose her and send her back to her husband!" the prophetess demanded.

And it was done!

The fame of those days in the summer of 1776—when a few score of white men overcame many times that number of Indians, and so brought to naught the plans of the British for the conquest of the frontier—was told for many years in the mountains. Some of the pioneers never wearied of telling how the news of the defeat of Oconostota and Dragging Canoe so dismayed Raven, the chief who was leading a large body of Indians into Virginia, that he turned back without striking a blow. Thus two hundred and ten men were responsible for bringing to nothing plans backed by fifteen thousand Indians.

Evidence that the uprising of the Indians had been directed by the British, and that British officers, in

disguise, were leaders of the savage troops, aroused the Colonists. Many expeditions against the Indians were undertaken. One of these, made at the call of Patrick Henry, led into the country of Oconostota on the Tellico River, far to the south of Watauga. Jack Sevier was given command of the company of scouts which accompanied the expedition.

This force of frontiersmen, for which Sevier was scouting, was met by several thousand Indians on the banks of the French Broad River. For a time it seemed that the Indians would attack the invaders, in the hope that they might bar the way to their rich country across the river. But for some reason the Cherokee force lost heart. Probably they had heard of the repeated disasters that had come to their fellows on other fields. At any rate, they broke and disappeared.

Jack Sevier's scouts pushed on across the French Broad into the country of the Indians, but they failed to find any trace of the savages. The army followed them, until they came to the towns of the Cherokees, on the banks of the Little Tennessee and the Tellico. All these Indian towns were destroyed, and the crops in the fields were burned. The Indians must be made to feel that they could not attack the whites with impunity.

But when the troops came to Echota, the chief town of the Cherokees, Sevier held back the soldiers, bent on destruction.

“Let Echota be spared!” he said. “This is the town of Nancy Ward, the prophetess who sent us at Fort Lee the word that enabled us to get ready for the invaders.”

But when the troops came to the town where Dragging Canoe had burned the boy who was taken captive at Fort Lee, Sevier did not attempt to restrain the righteous indignation of the settlers.

“Burn!” he said. “Let the Indians learn that one of our men cannot be touched without dire vengeance on those who harm him.”

Thus the wholesome fear of Nolichucky Jack was increased. The Indians felt more than ever that he was a scourge against whom their might could avail nothing.

Yet, with all their fear, they had unbounded confidence in him. What if he had burned their corn and destroyed their villages? What if he had laid waste their country and killed their warriors? He was a man! To fight against him was to fight with destiny. So, when the officials of North Carolina planned to make a treaty of peace with them, they sent word to the Governor:

“Send us Nolichucky Jack, for he will do us right.”

A treaty of peace was made with Oconostota. The possessions and the privileges of the whites were enlarged. Oconostota was cowed. But Dragging Canoe,

embittered, retired into his fastnesses along the Tennessee River, and became, with his renegades and outlaws, more than ever a thorn in the side of the Colonists.

North Carolina gave some recognition to the men who had handled her enemies so wonderfully. The government of the Watauga men, in the District of Washington, was recognized. Sevier, made one of the officials, tried to busy himself with the duties of his office. But his heart was with the men who were so ready to respond to his call against the insidious foes of the settlers. He was never so happy as when he was at the head of an expedition against the enemy—even happier, as has been said already, than when he was attending a horse-race. And that is saying much, for he did delight in a spirited contest between the blooded horses he was, even then, introducing into the Watauga country.

His opportunity for another campaign was to come soon.

CHAPTER IX

THE OUTLAWS OF NICK-A-JACK CAVE

THE confidence which Nolichucky Jack inspired in the Watauga pioneers, and his success in leading them against their foes, was responsible for a great change in their thoughts of the Indians.

John Carter was talking of this change to some of his neighbors. This is the way he expressed it:

“Once our only thought would have been, ‘How can we avoid the Indians?’ or, if we had no choice but to face them, our anxious question would have been, ‘How many are there?’

“But now we are not bothered by their number, or even by the thought that we may have to meet them. ‘Where are they?’ is our first question. Then, ‘Lead us to them!’ is our eager demand.”

“And Nolichucky Jack is the man to find where they are, to lead us to them, and to conquer them!” agreed Carter’s neighbor.

“What a whirlwind that man is when he takes the field!” Carter’s admiration once more found expression. “He does not wait for the Indians, but he goes after them, and he does this with such vim that the poor fellows do not know how to stand up against him. Really, I feel sorry for them sometimes.

“Did I ever tell you of the story told me by that young chief who was wounded in the last raid? Jack brought him into the fort, and asked us to take care of him until he was able to go back to Echota. One evening the chief was telling us of his initiation into manhood. When he was twelve years old an aged warrior, taking the sharp bone of a wolf, scratched his skin from head to foot until the blood came. Into the cuts, which were two inches wide, medicinal herbs were pressed. Then he was given a meal of mush and a partridge. His explanation of the reason for feeding him a partridge made me think of Sevier. In its flight the bird makes a noise with its wings resembling thunder, while in sitting or walking it is so remarkably silent that it is hard for a seeker to find it. Thus was indicated the clamor of the onset and the cautious stealth which should govern the movements of the warrior at all other times.

“Do you see it? Nolichucky Jack is like the partridge. His attack is like thunder, but his movements at other times are so quiet that no enemy knows he is about. Did you ever hear anything more terrifying than the yell he gives as he dashes into the fight?”

The confidence that came from having Jack Sevier as their leader was responsible for the decision to send back to Virginia the four hundred men who had been

led over the mountains to assist in holding back the Indians.

"They need every soldier for the fight against Great Britain," Sevier gave as his reason for letting the men go. "If you think we can get along without them, suppose we send them home."

"We can get along without them because you are here!" James Robertson declared. "Isn't that so, men?"

There was a shout of approval. "Nolichucky Jack is better than the whole four hundred!" an enthusiast said. Then, for fear the soldiers might hear of his statement, he added: "It isn't that the soldiers are not fine; I mean that Nolichucky Jack is better than five companies of the best soldiers."

Not long afterward there was even a greater indication of confidence in their leader. In the late summer of 1777, Captain Logan reached Watauga, after a perilous trip from Kentucky of two hundred miles through a wilderness infested by savages.

"Help!" was his plea. "The fort at Boonesborough has been besieged since July fourth. Nearly five hundred Indians, sent against us by the British, with foreign leaders, have been held off by a handful of men and boys. If they win, the whole Kentucky country will be lost to us. But they must not win. Yet, unless you help us, they will take the fort."

“What shall we do, boys?” Sevier asked the assembled frontiersmen.

“Take us to Boonesborough!”

“No, you don’t need me,” Sevier said, gratefully. “You will have Daniel Boone, and you will have Captain Logan.”

So one hundred men were made ready for the journey. With them they took many packhorses laden with supplies of food and ammunition. And what a wonderful trip it was! There were so many of them that they did not need to be so careful as Captain Logan had been on his way to Watauga; then he had with him only one sack of parched corn for food, for this was all that could be spared from the besieged fort, whose supplies were running very short. And he had found it necessary to hide in the daytime, doing all his travelling at night.

They arrived in good time to give needed assistance to the besieged, who succeeded in driving off the Indians. Best of all, the savages were so disheartened by their long, useless vigil that Boonesborough had relief for a long time.

When the company of stalwarts returned from Boonesborough, Sevier called a meeting to welcome them home. That gathering was as notable as many a famous meeting held during the Revolution by ardent patriots. How George Washington would have been

strengthened if he could have known of these men on the frontier who had been doing so much to protect the back door of the United States against the wiles of Great Britain!

“Out there across the mountains, and up north about Philadelphia and New York and Boston, they are fighting for liberty!” Sevier said to his attentive audience. “But our work here is as important as theirs. If we let the Indians in over the mountain barriers, they will have more foes to fight than they can take care of.”

“But don’t you think North Carolina and Virginia might pay more attention to us and help us in what we are doing for them?” one of the men asked.

“Let’s not bother about Virginia or North Carolina!” was Sevier’s reply. “We are not Virginians or North Carolinians. We are Americans! And we are fighting for Congress and for George Washington!”

The cheers that greeted his words indicated the patriotic temper of that crowd.

That night all went to their homes with the words of their hero-leader ringing in their ears.

“We are Americans, and we are fighting for Congress and for George Washington!” was from that day a rallying cry of the Wataugans.

But, unfortunately, there were among the mountaineers a few men who made the war an excuse for

lawless deeds. They claimed to be Tories, or men who were on the side of the king. The Whigs, or the men of the Colonies, they felt were their lawful prey. These Tories were continually making raids on their neighbors, stealing their horses and cattle, burning their houses, and even putting them to death in a fashion so barbarous that Indians would have recoiled from their deeds.

A favorite method with them was to extract money from the victim by threatening his life. Once a man was taken to a cliff on the Watauga and was told that he would be thrown over the precipice if he did not comply with the demands of his captors.

Many of these bandits, who were using the war as a cloak for their foul deeds against women and children as well as men, were driven out of North Carolina into the fastnesses of the mountains or the headwaters of the rivers that flowed through the Watauga settlements. From there they could make raids easily into the valleys. But in doing so they did not realize that they were on dangerous ground. For the men of Watauga would not submit to the actions of these bloodthirsty traitors.

The determination to put an end to the activities of the scoundrels came in an unexpected manner.

Late one night there was a knock at the door of James Robertson. Roused from sleep, he opened the

unguarded portal—for the doors of the pioneers were not barred, except in time of siege—and saw a woman who was almost hysterical.

“Oh, sir!” she cried. “Save him: They are coming to murder him in his bed!”

“To murder whom?” was the natural query.

“John Sevier,” the frenzied woman said. “They feel that he is in the way of their raids on the settlers, that if only they can dispose of him, they can do as they wish.”

“Who think this, my good woman?” Robertson persisted.

“The bad men; Tories, they call themselves. My husband is one of them. I heard them talk of what they would do before morning. Oh, sir! Won’t you save him?”

“Surely, we will send warning to him!” Robertson reassured her. “Yet I feel sure he would give a good account of himself. I hardly think that the man who has never been wounded in any of his fights with Indians can be killed by a black Tory!”

“Then I can go back home?” the woman asked. “My husband must not know that I have been away. But I had to save John Sevier. Three years ago, when we were moving to the place where we live now, Indians robbed us of our horses and left us helpless in the mountains. My little boy had a fever, and I did not

know what we were to do. Just then a man rode up on a beautiful black horse. When he heard our troubles he whistled for two other men who were near in the forest. Then the three of them rode off after the Indians and came back soon with the horses we had lost. He did not leave us until we had been taken to the cabin which my husband had built for us. He saved the life of my little boy that day. How could my husband forget the kindness of John Sevier? Tell me that he will be safe!"

A little company of men was gathered hastily by Robertson, who led them to Sevier's new home on the Nolichucky, to which he had removed from his log cabin on the Holston. A little while after their arrival, the renegades approached the house, but when they found they were expected they rode away quickly.

"How shall we deal with these dastards to keep them from more of their dirty work?" Robertson asked Sevier. "North Carolina has given us courts, and we have a courthouse at Jonesboro. But what good do courts and a courthouse do us when we are not allowed to try a man for murder or to punish him with death?"

"This is a time for prompt action," Sevier agreed. "Since North Carolina law does not help us, we must help ourselves. Suppose we call a meeting at your house, and organize for business."

The call was made, and several hundred determined men responded. Before the day was over they had organized a vigilance committee, which was to see that laws adopted for the settlement were obeyed. Arrangements were outlined to try by jury all men accused of crime.

"But we need something more," Sevier announced. "It will not do to have any Tories among us. We are all loyal men. But there have been coming among us some of whom we are not so sure. Suppose we make them all give a good account of themselves, or leave our borders!"

So it was ordered that the vigilance committee should go to all the settlements and ask the men to take the oath of allegiance to the United States.

"Those who refuse will have to find a place that is more in accord with their tastes and beliefs," Robertson announced. "We have no place in the Watauga settlements for Tories!"

In a few weeks the whole county was purified by the vigilance committee. Here and there a cabin was empty; its owner had gone to more congenial surroundings.

They found their new refuge with Dragging Canoe, the Indian chief who had been nursing his wrath against Jack Sevier and his neighbors since the day in 1776 when he returned, badly wounded, from the

attack on Fort Patrick Henry. Oconostota had tried to hold him in check, but the lawless leader of a band of Chickamaugas was determined to have revenge. He welcomed, then, the coming of the desperate Tories who had been driven away from the Watauga settlements. He received gladly the supplies of firearms and powder sent to him by the British, that they might be used against the patriots. And he rejoiced when parties of the outlaws who found shelter among his people went out to make raids on the homes of the settlers. Then, after committing all sorts of outrages, they returned to the fastnesses of Dragging Canoe's warriors.

The chosen dwelling place of Dragging Canoe and his people was in a beautiful country, along the Tennessee River. Their villages stretched many miles below Chickamauga Creek, at the section of the river where passage was easiest between the south and the north, and where wonderful hiding places could be found by those who were seeking refuge from pursuers. Lookout Mountain and Walden's Ridge appealed to many of them. Not only did the heights offer shelter, but the rapid rushing of the Tennessee's waters below and beyond protected them from the approach of enemies. But the greatest hiding place of all was Nick-a-Jack Cave, a curious cavern in the rocks, far above the Tennessee, more than twenty-five miles below Dragging Canoe's village. No one had succeeded in going to the limit of the passage of this cavern, though

many of the Indians and their renegade white allies hid several miles back from the entrance. They drank from the creek which flows from the mouth of the cavern, and they took from its water fish which were found as far back as the light from the opening could be seen.

Nick-a-jack Cave was used not only as a place of refuge, but as a point of vantage from which travellers on the river might be seen, and descent made on them. Most famous of the assaults on unfortunate boatmen on the Tennessee was made from the vicinity of the cave early in 1780, when James Donelson was conducting his heroic party of settlers from Watauga down the Tennessee to the Ohio. This raid is of special interest to those who are following the fortunes of Jack Sevier because one of those who was captured by the Indians, Jonathan Jennings, was about to be put to death when a trader named Rogers gave the man's captors much goods to spare his life. This unexpected action of the Tory renegade who lived among the Indians was explained by Rogers:

"Sevier took me prisoner a little while ago. He might have had my life. But he set me free. The best I can do to show my thanks to Sevier is to have another captive released for his sake."

The campaign during which Sevier captured Rogers was undertaken in 1779, after Dragging Canoe, with some of his outlawed white allies had made a raid on

a settler who lived far down toward Dragging Canoe's country.

By this raid the Indian chief interfered with the plan of the British, who had supplied him with his ammunition.

"Wait until you hear that the Indians from the north have come down on the settlers in Kentucky," he had been told. "Then do you attack the Watauga country with your fifteen hundred warriors."

Fortunately Dragging Canoe didn't obey orders. Having all the gunpowder he could use, he was unable to wait. His impatience betrayed his plans to Nolichucky Jack and his friends.

At once news of the raid came to Sevier at Watauga. Pausing only to send word to be on their guard to those in all parts of the Watauga country, he mounted his good black horse and made the forty-mile journey to the Shelbys and Sapling Grove.

There he found not only the father, but the four sons, Evan, Moses, James, and Isaac. To them he told his fears:

"Dragging Canoe has firearms and powder. If the British had sent these to Oconostota, we would have heard of it through Nancy Ward, the prophetess who has done us more than one good turn. Now we have learned the truth through Dragging Canoe's activity."

"Do you think he is planning a greater descent on

the whole settlement?" Evan Shelby, the father, asked anxiously.

"I do think so!" Sevier replied. "And unless we strike first there will be trouble. We must capture that powder before it can be used for our destruction."

"But how can we go down the Chickamauga?" James Shelby inquired, doubtfully. "It is a difficult journey. No one knows the way. Then fifteen hundred Indians must be taken care of when we get there."

"You don't know Jack Sevier as I know him!" Isaac Shelby responded. "Difficulties vanish when he is the leader. You can take us into Dragging Canoe's country, can't you, Jack?"

"My scouting experience will help me, though I did not go nearly so far south," was Sevier's modest reply. "From all I can learn, the country is hard to approach. The only way to reach it safely is by water."

"Then let us go by water!" Evan Shelby smiled as if the projected voyage was of small account.

"But how are we to pay the expenses of the expedition of seven or eight hundred men whom we must take if we are to expect to capture the powder from fifteen hundred Indians and perhaps five hundred pesky white men?" Sevier raised the question, though he intended to pay the costs himself, if necessary.

"That's all right," Isaac Shelby answered him.

"Count on me for all that is necessary. I haven't much money just now, but my credit is good."

Sevier accepted the offer without a word. "So one difficulty is out of the way," he said. "We are to remember, though, that we must have fifteen hundred men under arms, even if we need but half that number. We are going far beyond the country of Oconostota. What if he should descend on the settlements while we are gone? We must leave as large a guard here as we take with us."

What a busy time there was in the settlements during the next few weeks! First came the enlistment of men, then the gathering of these men on the banks of the Holston, where they felled great poplar trees from which canoes were made. One hundred of these rough but sturdy vessels were needed. A few more were built of lumber brought by water from the saw-mill on the Watauga, with its picturesque water wheel. Tools were primitive, but the workmen were skilful; they could do wonders with the axe and the adze.

"We must be careful, or Dragging Canoe will know of our preparations," Sevier told the workmen, as they were about to begin their task. "Suppose we place horsemen so that they will be able to catch any one who might take word of our activities."

The work was done in good time, and without interference. The boats were launched, and were found

safe for the navigation of the treacherous waters even in the midst of the spring floods.

April 10, 1779, the start was made for the three-hundred-mile venture into the unknown. Fortunately Sevier found a man who had been over the route at one time, but dependence on him proved to be unwise.

“Until we pass the mouth of the Little Tennessee, where Oconostota is gathered with his warriors, we must travel by night,” Sevier told the men who attempted to pilot the expedition. “You say there are difficult shoals and rapids, but we must negotiate these in the darkness.”

Anxiously the leaders—Evan Shelby, as the senior officer, was chief among them—watched the leagues of river bank drift by them. When they were close to Oconostota’s towns they muffled their paddles and took all other precautions of which they could think.

The breathed more freely when, the danger passed, the Holston carried them into the Tennessee River, and on toward Chickamauga Creek, where they hoped to find Dragging Canoe and the ammunition which was the object of the expedition.

“How can we hope to draw near to the Indian village without being discovered?” James Shelby asked, with anxiety.

The question was answered soon. For when the hundred canoes with their loads of picturesque fron-

tiersmen, garbed in skins and bearing their deadly rifles, were near their destination, it was discovered that there was a thick cane-brake between the river and the village. Better still, the river was in flood, and the canoes could drift among the forest of canes, without being seen from the village.

With extreme caution the journey through the cane-brake was made. At length the leaders could peep through the canes to the wigwams, which were spread for nearly a mile along the stream. As they looked they realized why they had been so successful in approaching unseen. Most of the five hundred warriors who lived at this part of Dragging Canoe's village were gathered on the plain near the bank, watching a ball game! The noise made by the contestants and by those who cheered them on was so great that it was impossible to hear any muffled sound from the river.

Fascinated, the frontiersmen gazed at the spectacle before them. Time was passing, but they spent a few minutes watching the progress of the game, as this was explained to them by their guide, who had seen a game on this very ball field.

"See how the plain, which is about three hundred feet long, has two poles at each end, and one pole in the centre," he whispered to Sevier. "Each man in the two teams of players has in his hands two sticks, bent at the end, and bound together by thongs, so that they become a good instrument to bat the ball. See

how they throw the ball into the air at the centre pole, and how each party does its best to drive it through the pole on its own side. The winner must do this twelve times."

"I thought this was a game for boys," James Shelby said, after listening to the guide's explanation. "But look how many older men are playing!"

"Yes, the game is enjoyed by all the warriors. See how their skins glisten! They are greased, so that they can slip from the grasp of those who try to hold them. You see, it is allowed to strike, trip or grapple with an opponent, but the ball must never be touched except with the stick."

So intent on the game were the men in the foremost canoes that they did not notice the approach of an Indian, who was about to give the alarm when Sevier seized him and choked back the cry he was going to utter.

By signs, the prisoner was promised his life if he would lead the way to the wigwam of Dragging Canoe. The Indian showed them a path that led far from the ball game, and the invaders were almost in the presence of Dragging Canoe before their presence was discovered by the players and spectators on the ball field.

What a yell there was when the Indians and the Tories saw their danger! And what an answering yell sounded from Shelby and Sevier and their men!

For a few moments the Indians thought of resist-

ance, but when forty of their number lay dead near the wigwam of the chief, they broke and ran for hiding places. Sevier's men tried to follow them, but soon gave up the chase.

"At any rate we have the ammunition for which we came!" Shelby said. "We must see that nothing happens to this. Then we must burn the villages."

Next came the turn of the Indians in the other villages of the tribe. These, too, were burned—eleven of them. The inhabitants followed Dragging Canoe to their haunts far from the river. And when they returned, after the departure of the foe, they found that all their provisions, as well as their homes, had been destroyed. And not enough ammunition was left to them to hunt the game which might take the place of the store of corn.

The problem of return to the Holston was solved by the capture of one hundred and fifty horses. When the canoes had been destroyed, the plunder was loaded on the horses, and faces were turned northward.

"Not one is missing!" Sevier said, with gratification, when the party separated to go to their homes. "And we can breathe more freely now, for Dragging Canoe and his warriors and Tories will not be able to go on the war-path for another year at least!"

CHAPTER X

NOLICHUCKY JACK WINS PROMOTION

FOR several months after his return from the successful expedition against Dragging Canoe, Jack Sevier had a taste of the home life for which he longed when he was on the field against the Indians. There was always work to be done about Plum Grove, as the plantation on the Nolichucky was called, but there were many hours for such recreations as horse-racing on his own private track, and for expeditions with his boys, Joseph and James. How Jack enjoyed his boys, and how the boys delighted in being with him!

This fact was a surprise to some of the cronies of the boys. "You mean to say that you went off with your Dad for an all-day tramp, and that you liked it?" one of them asked. "Why, I'd go miles out of my way to escape an hour alone with my father! But of course your father is Jack Sevier. That makes a difference, I suppose. But I don't see how you can make a companion of your father."

"He's the best companion to be found!" came Joseph's loyal response. "He's our chum. He's like another boy. Wish you could have heard him last night as he described the ball game he saw down at

Dragging Canoe's village! He always has something interesting to talk about. The times when he is at home are too few to suit us."

"Wouldn't you like to come over to the house to-night?" James invited the doubter. "You'll see what we mean."

So when the family company gathered about the huge fireplace in the log cabin on the Nolichucky, there was an addition to the usual group. The boy's mother—she was such a good friend of theirs that they forgot she was only their stepmother—sat on one side of the fireplace, while Jack Sevier lay on the floor on his back on the other side. Sprawled between were Joseph, and James, as well as Amos Brown. The younger children had gone to the attic to bed. Just at first Amos was a little ill at ease; this was his first intimate touch with Nolichucky Jack, and awe struggled with curiosity until awe was forgotten in the absorbing interest of the stories the father told his audience.

"Would you like to hear the tale of 'The Two Old Men,' as it was related to us by a wounded Cherokee last spring? Well, here it is:

"Two old men went hunting. One had an eye drawn down and was called Uk-kwanagito, 'Eye-drawn-down.' The other had an arm twisted out of shape and was called Uk-kusuatsuti, 'Bent-bow-shape.' They killed a deer and put the meat in a pot. The sec-

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ond old man dropped a piece of bread into the soup and smacked his lips as he ate. 'Is it good?' said the first old man. Said the other, 'Hayu! uk-kwunagi' sti . . . Yes, sir, it will drawn down one's eye.'

"Thought the first man to himself, 'He means me.' So he dipped a piece of bread into the pot, and smacked his lips as he tasted it. 'Do you find it good?' said the other old man. Said his comrade, 'Hayu! uk-ku' suntsuseti—Yes, sir! it will twist up one's arm.' Thought the second old man, 'He means me.' So he got very angry and tried to kill the first old man, and then they fought until each killed the other."

"Tell us about an Indian fight, Father," James pleaded.

"Did I ever tell you about what two men named Moore and Handly did during the battle that summer of '76 when Nancy Ward warned us that the Cherokees were coming?"

"Well, these two men saw two Indians fleeing when the battle went against them. 'Let's go after them!' Moore said. 'I'll take the big fellow, and you take the other.' Moore was the first to overtake his man. Both he and the Indian fired at the same instant. Both missed! Moore tried to knock the Indian over with the butt of his gun, but the gun broke. Then the two men clinched. Moore was the more agile, so he succeeded in throwing the Indian. But the Indian was

much larger and stronger, so he jumped to his feet, and tried to tomahawk Moore. Fortunately Moore managed to knock the weapon from the Indian's hand.

"Now Handly, too, had pursued his Indian until the Indian, knowing that he would soon be overtaken, turned and fired at his pursuer. The gun missed. The savage, with Indian stoicism, stood with folded arms, awaiting the shot he knew would come. The shot killed him. Handly scalped the Indian, then turned to help Moore, who was still trying to hold his Indian at arm's length. The stronger Indian was forcing him, little by little, within reach of the tomahawk, which was lying close by on the ground. Fortunately the agile Moore succeeded, whenever the Indian was about to grasp the weapon, in kicking it out of reach. Their game was nearly over, for Moore's strength was going fast. But Handly came up just in time, and managed to kill the Indian, so saving the exhausted Moore."

This tale of the success of the two white men had just been completed when there was a hail from the road.

"That's Robertson!" Sevier announced, as he stretched his long legs and rose to his feet. "Our good time is over, boys. Come again, Brown. You know you are always welcome to Plum Grove."

Then, going to the door of the cabin, Sevier called:
"Light, Robertson! Come in to the fire. You're as

welcome as the rain when the fire is eating up the forest.”

“Don’t let me break up your party,” Robertson said to the boys, as a place was made for him at the fire, which was needed already, though the time was early fall. “Jack has been telling you stories, you say? Wonder if he has told you about the time he went turkey hunting when we were at school together, up at Staunton? We were tired of a long spell of hog meat, and Jack said he could save us from our misery. That was when we had to hide our guns out in the forest because some pesky visitor to the school had complained about us bloodthirsty boys who were always shooting at a mark. Well, Jack got his gun, and he got his turkey. Or he shot the turkey. But when he went to grab what he thought was a dead turkey, he tripped and fell over it. And how that turkey did kick! It was an old gobbler, and he let fly with his legs like an old mule. Jack wouldn’t let go, and the turkey wouldn’t stop kicking. So when I got there his face was scratched, one eye was closed, and his coat was torn.”

“Well, we had turkey for dinner, didn’t we?” the hero of the incident asked. “What if it was tough? And what if I did have a great misery in my face. Isn’t pain better than too much hog meat?”

“’Twas too much of a temptation to take down the

hero a peg, Jack," Robertson said, after the laughing boys had gone from the room with Mrs. Sevier.

"Too bad to drive the boys away, but I've been waiting to have a good talk with you about the future."

"You mean the future of the Watauga settlements?" Sevier asked.

"No, I mean my own future."

"It is the same thing. Watauga and Robertson go together."

"No, the time has come for Robertson to drop out of Watauga."

"Then the time has come for Sevier to drop out of Watauga! You and I have been together for more than seven years, and we'll have to stay together, Watauga without Robertson won't be Watauga."

"Watauga with Sevier will be better than ever Watauga has been with Robertson!" came the smiling reply. "But wait! Let me tell my story.

"I'll have to go back quite a while. Three years before you came to the settlements, a dozen men, of whom Casper Mansker was one, went from Virginia, through Cumberland Gap, into the Kaintuck country. Then, they went south, along a buffalo trace, until they came to a Lick on the Cumberland River, where there is a deposit of salt on the flat that brings the buffaloes by thousands. Mansker said that the animals there paid no attention to anything but the salt. He

shot two deer at the Lick, but the buffaloes trampled the bodies under their feet. Only when the wind blew the scent of the men and horses to them would they run from them.

“ On his return to Virginia, Mansker told of the beautiful spot by the river. One of the three who heard the story was Henry Scaggs, who took forty men from Virginia into the new country. Because they lived on the game they killed, and because they were away from their Virginia home for quite a while, they have been called the Long Hunters. They were not welcomed by the Cherokee hunters, for they were told to kill the game they wanted, and then go home. A little later a band of Cherokees carried away as captives three of the party; one of these escaped later, but we know nothing of the fate of the other two.

“ When those of the party who survived the attack went on to the Cumberland, they found the salt Lick for which they had been looking. They told of seeing thousands of animals of many kinds—buffaloes, elk, bear, and deer, with many wild turkeys scattered among them. All of them were quite restless, some flying, and others were busily employed in licking the earth. Scaggs said that the buffaloes and other animals had so eaten away the soil that they could, in places, go entirely underground. Scaggs said, too, that some time before he was at the Lick two hunters had killed so

many buffaloes there that they were able to load a keel boat with tallow and tongues. This boat they took down the Cumberland, then down the Ohio and the Mississippi to New Orleans."

"I must see that country," interrupted Sevier, who had been absorbed in Robertson's story.

"That's what other people thought," Robertson continued. "You know how Richard Henderson and his Company bought from the Indians millions of acres of land, which included the Lick. You know as well as I do the story of their settlement on the upper part of the land, in the Kaintuck country. They had a hard time there, but they were doing fairly well when, two years ago, the Virginia House of Delegates said that the Company's purchase of lands from the Indians was void."

"That was hard!" was Sevier's comment. "To think of it—after all their hard work and their fights with the Indians for those new lands!"

"Henderson was not discouraged. He thought of the great Lick on the Cumberland. This, too, was a part of his Company's purchase from the Indians. He thought that this was within the western territory of North Carolina. Perhaps he could settle there, since North Carolina had not announced that the purchase of the lands within her boundaries was void."

“That was like Henderson!” Sevier was always glad of a chance to speak in praise of another. “I like his persistence.”

“Now you understand why I was tempted by Henderson’s request that I go out and study the country for him.” Robertson continued. “While you were making that wonderful expedition against the Indians down in Dragging Canoe’s country, I was out on the Cumberland. Nine of us went to the Lick, saw how good the country is, then planted corn for the use of those who would go out this fall. Before I came back to Watauga I went to see George Rogers Clark at Port St. Vincents on the Wabash, for I had heard that he was the owner, by grant from Virginia, of much land at the Lick. If I could buy from him for Henderson the right to settle at the Lick, Virginia could say nothing against the settlement, if it should turn out that the Lick is within Virginia’s western lands instead of in North Carolina territory beyond the mountains.”

“Well done, Robertson! We always knew that you could see things in every possible way.” Sevier’s admiration for his old friend was evident in his looks as well as in his words.

“Well, that is my story. The Lick on the Cumberland beckons me, and I must go back there. I am to lead a company of the planters from Watauga. It

will be a hard trip, but we can make it in fifteen days, if all is well."

"And you are not coming back?"

"No, I aim to stay there the rest of my days."

"Would that be right, Robertson? Think how we need you here in Watauga. And think what you would be giving up. You have a good home, for which you have worked hard. Here you are prosperous, but there you will have to fight for everything all over again. Hadn't you better stay with us here?"

"That isn't what you really feel, Jack! You know it isn't! I can see in your eyes the hunger for the country of the Lick."

Sevier laughed. "You are right, Robertson. Go! And let me go with you! I, too, want to keep in the front. We must stay together. We have worked for Watauga; now let us work for the settlement on the Lick."

"No, Sevier," Robertson's reply was firm. Putting his hand on his friend's shoulder, he said, slowly and impressively:

"You must stay here. Without you Watauga would go to pieces. The Cherokees would drive the settlers back over the mountains. This country might be lost to the Continental Congress. It isn't too much to feel that the whole fight for liberty might be decided against us if this settlement does not continue, and if

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you are not here to hold in check the savages and the Tories whom Great Britain's agents are trying to keep stirred up."

"But I can't do this great work alone!" Sevier objected, modestly.

"You can! There is no one but you to do it. Even if there were, no one could do it better than you. You are the most skilful Indian fighter I have known. Stay, and you win the country for America. Go, and perhaps there will be no America."

Sevier thought a moment. Then he put his hand in that of Robertson.

"So be it! I'll stay."

"Said like Jack Sevier, who is henceforth the leader of the Watauga settlements! You won't need me here any longer, but you have made yourself indispensable."

"But why do you go overland to the Lick on the Cumberland?" Sevier asked. Although he could not go to the region beyond, he was setting his fertile brain to work for his friend. "Why not make canoes, as we did for our expedition against Dragging Canoe, float down the Holston to the Tennessee, and down the Tennessee to the Ohio, then ascend the Cumberland to the Lick? This will take a longer time, but the journey will be much easier."

Jack Sevier's suggestion bore fruit when the decis-

ion was made to divide the party of emigrants to the Lick. One section was to go overland with Robertson, while the other—which included Robertson's wife—was to take the water route. Of this section Colonel John Donelson was to be the leader.

Hungrily Sevier stood by as the two parties set out. How he wished he could be with them! But the knowledge that duty still called him on the Watauga made him strong to resist the temptation to be on the move to the farthest frontier.

Anxiously he waited until, months later, word came from the Lick where the emigrants had made a settlement which they called Nashborough. Later this became Nashville.

One day, in the spring of 1780, James Sevier came running into the house at Plum Grove, waving a letter which had come from Robertson.

“Donelson, with his three hundred people, is here,” the message began. “Perhaps the best way to tell what this means is to quote the final entry in the journal of the voyage kept by the brave leader:

“‘Monday, April 24th. This day, we arrived at our journey's end at the Big Salt Lick, where we had the pleasure of finding Captain Robertson and his company. It is a source of satisfaction to us to be enabled to restore to him and others their families and friends, who were entrusted to our care, and who, some time

since, perhaps despaired of ever meeting again. Though our prospects at present are dreary, we have found a few log cabins, which have been built on a cedar bluff above the Lick, by Captain Robertson and his company.'

"I wish I could tell you of the wonderful story of the voyage. One disaster of many worked out for good. One boatload, in which Smallpox raged, was kept far in the rear of the flotilla. The Indians killed all on board, but took the disease, and hundreds of the tribe died, so we have learned since. Is that the reason we have had so little trouble with the Indians? Probably their superstition has kept them from troubling us.

"We are to have a government here, much on the plan that you suggested that night at Plum Grove, when you decided to be faithful to Watauga as its future leader. Thus you have had a large part in shaping the fortunes of the new settlement."

Sevier sighed as he thought of the thrills he might have shared.

"That is, I might have shared them, if I had been willing to forget my neighbors here and their needs," he thought.

"But now, Jack Sevier, the word for you is 'Hold on! and Forward!'"

CHAPTER XI

SEVIER'S "MONGRELS" SEEK THE BRITISH

"COME to the wedding feast! Nolichucky Jack is keeping open house!"

The word travelled swiftly over the mountains and through the valleys, and the response was tremendous. No one who could possibly go resisted the call to witness the happiness of the beloved leader who had announced that he would marry the Bonny Kate whom he had rescued during the Indian attack on Fort Lee four years before.

So hundreds of men, women and children made their way, on August 14, 1780, to the log cabin of Jack Sevier on the banks of the Nolichucky. Curiously they watched and listened as the frontier minister, Parson Doak, performed the marriage ceremony. Then with eagerness they turned to the feast prepared for them with lavish hand. Tables were spread for more than a thousand people to whom were brought huge portions from the great oxen which had been roasted in the forest, over charcoal fires.

After the feasting came the dancing, to music supplied by scores of accomplished fiddlers.

The festivities were still going on at a pace fast

and furious when there was an interruption. A company of men rode their horses among the tables and shouted the blood-curdling battle yell which Sevier had made familiar to his men.

“Isaac Shelby, as I live!” Sevier shouted, when he had come from the festivities. “And what a company of good men and true you have with you! You are well come. My house and all it contains are yours!”

“We know that, Sevier,” Shelby greeted him. “I think these men have been your guests before, and have enjoyed your wonderful hospitality. But to-day we have a more serious errand than to eat and drink and dance.”

“Come with me, Shelby, and tell me what is on your mind,” Sevier invited, as he led the way into the house.

The bedraggled men who had accompanied Shelby scattered among the guests. In feast and frolic they forgot the trials of days of fighting and retreating before advancing British hosts.

When Shelby and Sevier were alone, Shelby told vividly the story of British activity which threatened the life of the Colonies. Since the fall of Charleston, the conquest of Georgia and South Carolina had been completed.

“But they are not content with what they have done, or with what they can do themselves,” Shelby explained.

“Once more they are trying to rouse the Indians against us. Arms and ammunition have been sent to the Creeks and the Cherokees, that thousands of them may come against us here. Oconostota has been glad to listen to their plots, for he is in a hurry to see the settlers driven out of the mountains.”

“And what of Lord Cornwallis?” Sevier asked.

“While the Indians are keeping us backwoodsmen occupied, he thinks he will be able to march triumphantly north, until he can join the forces about New York, and there can help in giving the final blow to our liberties.”

“We’ll have something to say about all that, won’t we, Shelby?” was Sevier’s only comment.

“But another plan has been made to keep us out of the fighting. If the Indians do not stop us, Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Ferguson is to put us out of business. He has been sent into the mountains to gather together all the Tories and the discontented men who can be persuaded to fight for England. He has been engaged in this work for some time.”

“What sort of man is this Ferguson?” Sevier asked. “He can’t be worth much, or he wouldn’t be trying to get the Tories together.”

“He is a fine man, they tell me. There is a story that when he was at the Battle of Brandywine he had his guns pointed at an officer whom he might have

shot. But he refused to do this because the man had his back turned. Later Ferguson learned that this officer was General Washington. ‘I am not sorry I did not know at the time it was,’ he remarked. So this soldier who is seeking to turn the Tories against us is a man whom we can feel proud to fight.”

“I wonder if we will have to fight him, after all,” said Sevier. “I cannot think that the plans of the British will succeed.”

“But what if they do succeed?” Shelby asked.

“They can’t succeed,” was Sevier’s brave reply. “If we are driven back from the mountains, we will not stay to become slaves of Great Britain. We’ll go down the Tennessee River to the Ohio and the Mississippi. We have known freedom too long to be willing to give in to the powers that would enslave us.”

“Then you can be counted on to join us in resisting the foe if he appears!” Shelby did not ask a question; he made a statement of what he knew was a fact. Sevier could be depended on, no matter what need might arise.

With this understanding, Shelby mounted his horse and rode to his home at Sapling Grove on the Holston. But he had barely reached home when a man named Samuel Phillips sought him, bearing a message that put an end to all feeling of even temporary security.

“I come from Colonel Ferguson, whose prisoner I was. By me he sends a message. Unless you cease

your opposition to Great Britain, he will march his army over the mountains, hang the leaders, and lay the country waste with fire and sword."

Having delivered his message, the speaker hastened to add:

"Now that I have kept my promise to him, I wish to tell you that my heart is with those who fight for liberty, and that I shall be glad to join you when you resist the approach of the boastful commander."

Once more Shelby saddled his horse and began the forty-mile ride to Sevier's home, that he might tell of Ferguson's taunt, and of the eagerness of the men on the Holston and the Watauga to make him swallow his words.

But to his disappointment the man he sought was not at home. "You will find him at Jonesboro, where there is a horse-race to-day," Mrs. Sevier informed him.

At first Shelby was tempted to resent what seemed like an unworthy occupation in a time of danger. Mrs. Sevier, reading his thought, rushed to her husband's defense:

"It pleases me that Jack is able to occupy himself with matters that relieve him in the midst of his anxieties. And isn't it fine that his recreation is so helpful to our new community, because it encourages the breeding of fine horses, which are so necessary to us now

in time of war, and will be still more useful when the British have been forced to give us our country!”

With a smile and a wave of the hand, Shelby was off for another twenty miles. He found his friend at the race-track, and was gratified by Sevier's prompt response to the call to service.

“We must do something, and at once!” Sevier said, as he turned away from the sport which, to him, was a part of his work for his country. “Ferguson must not cross the mountains. We can hold him back, and we will.”

“Shall we send out a call for the men to gather to meet him when he comes?” Shelby asked, thoughtfully.

“No, Shelby,” came the firm reply. “The time has come to go after him. He expects us to wait for his coming. Why not surprise him? Our victory will be half won when we do what he does not look to see us do.”

“But will the men be willing to go over such a dangerous route?”

“Try them! If I know them—and I think I do—it will be harder to keep them back than to urge them forward.”

“But who will supply the funds we need for the expedition?” Once more cautious Shelby made inquiry, not because he was not in sympathy with Sevier's

plan, but because it was his way to look every difficulty in the face.

"I wish I could equip the troops for the expedition into North Carolina," Sevier replied. "Everything I own is at the service of my country, as you know. But I cannot raise the sum we need. Yet I am not bothered about the equipment, any more than about the men. The men we need will be with us, they will be made ready for the field and we shall go forth to victory."

But the two men realized that Ferguson was not their only problem.

"How about the Tories and the Indians?" Shelby put into words the anxiety both of them felt.

"It would be foolish to take all the men we can raise on the expedition over the mountains." As Sevier spoke his fertile brain was outlining a plan for a victory over the British commander that would not be made useless by the destruction of the Watauga settlements.

"How would you manage the two tasks?" As Shelby asked the question he was sure that a workable plan had shaped in the fertile brain of his friend.

"We must take a sufficient force with us as we seek for Ferguson," Sevier replied. "At the same time we must have a guard sufficient to hold the Tories and Indians in check until we return. Then we all can devote ourselves to Oconostota and his savage hordes. Yet I realize that the hard part of that programme will

be to provide enough men to remain at home. Everybody will want to go to the battle front.”

“Do you realize what you are thinking of doing?” Shelby asked the question, though he thought proudly that Sevier had considered the difficulty he was about to raise. “Five thousand Indians are ready to pounce down on us. Then there are half as many white men to face in North Carolina. And we may be able to raise from eight hundred to one thousand men. How can we expect victory over either enemy if we divide our little force as you suggest?”

“You know the answer!” Sevier’s voice rang proudly as he spoke. “The thousand we can raise are mountain men, tried and true, and they will be fighting for their homes and for liberty. Are they not more than equal to ten times their number who are driven by motives less worthy?”

Before Shelby and Sevier separated they agreed that all who would take part in the conflict should meet at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga, on September 25, 1780.

As soon as the first announcement of the plan was made the men began to respond. Horsemen carried it along the valleys. Others climbed up to the mountain coves, or crossed over into North Carolina where refugees who had fled before Ferguson’s advancing army were in hiding.

“The redcoats are coming. Rally for Nolichucky Jack and freedom!” was the clarion cry.

And what a response there was! The men came singly, by twos and threes, by dozens, by scores. With pride Sevier looked them over. What a splendid body they were!

“Now who will stay to guard our homes?” they were asked. No one wished to stay, so it became necessary to decide by lot who were to go after Ferguson, and who were to do the harder task of remaining on guard in the valleys.

One of the happiest of those who were permitted to go across the mountains was Joseph Sevier, Jack’s oldest son, who was eighteen years of age.

“Let me go, too!” James Sevier pleaded. “I know I am only sixteen, but I want to fight by Father’s side.”

When the father said that he was too young, and that there was no horse for him to ride, he said he was ready to walk, if need be. But his stepmother pleaded for him. “Take him with you!” she begged. Her request was granted. So two eager boys rode with their father on the long journey in search of the enemy.

“Now how about the equipment you said you could secure for the men?” Shelby asked Sevier.

“John Adams must lend the funds to us. As the

man in charge of land entries in Sullivan County, a part of the Watauga country, he has large deposits under his control.”

The need was stated to Adams. He thought a moment, then he said:

“Colonel Sevier, I have no right to do as you ask. The money belongs to North Carolina. But if the British conquer, of what use is it to have money? Liberty will be gone. Let the money go, too. I have more than twelve thousand dollars. Take it. You will win, and you will return the money all in good time.”

On the appointed day eight hundred and forty men gathered at Sycamore Shoals. What a stalwart lot they were! The British would have laughed at their equipment of hunting knives and Deckard rifles, the clothing of buckskin shirts and trousers, with buck's tails on their heads. But the members of their families, who had gathered to bid them farewell, and the four hundred and eighty men who were to remain behind to guard the settlements did not laugh; they cheered, then joined reverently with Parson Doak in the prayer to the God of Hosts to be with his servants, and in the blessing which followed the prayer:

“Go forth, my brave men—go forth with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”

So they mounted their hardy horses and moved

toward the rising sun in divisions commanded by Isaac Shelby and Jack Sevier and William Campbell. Most of the men were on horseback, though some were on foot. It was a brave looking company, for the trappings of the horses were stained red and yellow, and the clothing of the men was most picturesque. The country travelled was rough. In the beginning, the journey had to be made single file. At night the leaders selected a suitable camping ground, and those who followed halted with them. They built their camp-fire, ate their rude meal, for which they depended largely on game killed in the forest, then stretched out on the hard ground for the night, for they had no tents, and, in fact, little of the equipment that an army on the march thinks is absolutely necessary.

The first day the trail led between the Yellow Mountain and the Roan Mountain. On the way they crossed the swift Doe River, then followed the stream until its gorge became so narrow that they had to go up Tioga Creek. On all sides were the hardwood forests, where white oak, red oak, and sometimes white pine and yellow pine grew luxuriantly. Sometimes a frightened deer scurried across the path, while more than once a big black bear looked at them through the underbrush, then shambled away to quieter regions.

As they climbed higher the bushes of azalea and galax and the clumps of rhododendron were everywhere.

“You should see the country in May or June,” Sevier remarked to the men who rode behind him. “Then the azalea bushes are a mass of pink and orange and crimson, while the billowy blossoms of the rhododendron complete a glorious picture, of which the wonderful mountain heights are the frame. And this is the country the British and the Indians wish to take away from us. They can’t do it!”

Mountain passes where an enemy might have destroyed them from ambush were threaded with care, and high mountains were crossed. After a few days they were among the settlers in North Carolina, and then their little army was increased by five hundred men. They knew that Ferguson had nearly twice as many, but they were confident of the result of the contest which they expected most eagerly.

The difficulties of the way were increased by a deluge of rain which fell for several days. Perhaps this led the commander of the expedition to feel that some of the men might feel like turning back.

“Let’s give them a chance to back out, if they feel like it,” Sevier proposed to his fellow commanders. “It would be better to face the enemy with five hundred whole-hearted men than with fifteen hundred, one thousand of whom are not with us heart and soul.”

“Now is the time to decide the question!” Shelby

agreed. "I have my doubts if there are any men who will feel like going back home until our work is done. But we shall see!"

So, on the seventh day out from Sycamore Shoals, when the rain had ceased, Sevier told the little army to form in a great circle, for Colonel Cleveland, one of the officers who had joined the party in North Carolina, had something to say to them.

"We are soon to meet the enemy," Colonel Cleveland began. "It may be that some of you will feel that it would be better to go back to Watauga than forward to meet the enemy. Anybody who wishes to do so is at liberty to back out. All that you need to do is to step three paces to the rear."

The speaker paused. But the men stood as they were; no one moved.

"You understand?" Sevier followed up the talk of the North Carolinian. "Then why don't you move?"

"Because we can't move any way but forward!" one of the men replied.

Then what a cheer there was! In this officers and men joined heartily.

In the meantime Ferguson had learned of the approach of the enemy. He, too, was a brave man, and he resolved to wipe out these upstarts who dared to dispute his passage of the mountains. He sent messengers to Cornwallis, who was sixty miles away,

seeking reënforcements, and asking the Tories about him to rally to his standard. His letters to these Tories showed his contempt for the enemy. Perhaps that contempt had something to do with the issue of the battle that followed. For he wrote:

“Unless you wish to be eaten up by an inundation of barbarians, who have begun by murdering an unarmed son before the aged father, and afterwards lopped off his arms, and who by their shocking cruelties and irregularities give the best proof of their cowardice and want of discipline—I say, if you wish to be poisoned, robbed and murdered, and see your wives and daughters in four days abused by the troops of mountain men, if you wish or deserve to live, and bear the name of men, grasp your arms in a moment, and run to camp. The Backwater men have crossed the mountains. If you choose to be degraded forever and ever by a set of mongrels, say so at once, and let your women turn their backs upon you, and look for real men to protect them!”

The spirit of the “mongrels” was shown when, after a twenty-mile march in a cold, drenching rain, in reply to the question of a Tory as to how many men there were in the patriot army, the sturdy reply was given:

“Enough to whip Ferguson!”

Ferguson waited for the mongrels from the

Watauga, having taken his stand on the southern slope of King's Mountain, a massive eminence that stretches for sixteen miles along the border of North Carolina and South Carolina.

“I can't be driven from this place by all the rebels out of sheol!” said the commander, who had selected the site for battle. “I hold a position that God himself can't drive me from! Now let them come!”

CHAPTER XII

THE "MONGRELS" WIN

"TO-MORROW will see our victory!" Nolichucky Jack declared with positiveness to the company of commanders that gathered to talk over the situation.

"But Ferguson is in a position from which it will be almost impossible to dislodge him!" came the objection from one who heard the prophecy. "The spies we have captured tell us that he is on the summit of a ridge, where there are no trees, behind a mass of rough rocks. We must climb the ridge before we can try to dislodge him. How can we do this?"

"There is no position that cannot be taken by our mountain boys!" Once more Sevier spoke with confidence. "What if we do have to climb the hill? There are trees on the slope, and we can find cover from which we can send a deadly fire among the men behind the rocks.

"I suggest that, when we come to the ridge, we divide into four parties, and that we climb the slope so as to attack the enemy from all sides. But before we begin the ascent, let us pause long enough to give our battle yell. I believe that will do half the work."

The other commanders agreed with Sevier, so,

when instructions had been given, the seven hundred and twenty men set out on their rough ride of fifty miles, over ridges, through canyons, along watercourses. This final stage of the journey was begun at three o'clock in the afternoon. After a pause for a hasty meal of bacon and parched corn, they rode on through the long hours of the night.

At dawn they halted again. Some wished to rest, but Sevier and Shelby urged them forward after a hurried breakfast. That morning they passed little knots of North Carolina men, who looked on in wonder at the stalwarts who were such a contrast to themselves.

"They are giants!" one man was heard to remark. "Ferguson will have to look out."

By noon, when the Watauga men knew they were within a short distance of Ferguson's position, they ate another frugal meal, then waited while their commanders gave final instructions.

"Fresh prime your guns," Sevier said to his followers. "Then let every man go into battle resolved to fight until he dies."

"We'll follow you to the death!" The response of a corporal was taken up by all the men. "To the death!" was the shout which gratified the leader and put new life into the little army. What if they knew that they were moving against an enemy in a most advantageous position! Nothing could keep them from

winning. Their homes and their country were at stake. They were not troubled about the outcome for themselves. Life seemed of small consequence in comparison with the duty laid upon them that day.

At the foot of the steep wooded slope of the ridge of Kings Mountain they waited until their leaders were sure that every man understood what he was to do.

"There they are, my brave boys! Shout as only you know how, then on, and fight like devils!" Colonel Campbell, one of the four commanders, cried.

And what a shout followed! It was the famous battle yell that had chilled the blood of so many savages and outlaws.

Up above them, behind the sheltering boulder, Ferguson's men heard it, and their faces blanched, in spite of themselves. Even one of the officers was dismayed, for he said to Ferguson:

"Listen to the devils! If they fight as they shout, we have no easy task before us!"

As he spoke a like yell came from another side. Then followed a yell behind them, and another yell in front.

"We're surrounded!" Ferguson said. "They'll be on us in a moment! Pass the word to the men to be ready for a bayonet charge!"

The guns of the British forces were equipped with

butcher knives in lieu of bayonets, and much was expected of these weapons.

The mountain men had no bayonets, but they had something far better—a determination to drive the enemy from their stronghold and so save from invasion the country west of the mountains.

But the British could not at once find use for the bayonets. A galling fire came upon them from all sides.

Yet the enemy could not be seen! Most of them were hiding behind trees; from there they acted in accordance with instructions, and picked off man after man who thought himself secure among the rocks.

At once Ferguson gave the call to leave the rocks and charge down the hill. With bayonets fixed the men leaped forward, and succeeded in dislodging the attackers, and in driving them toward the foot of the slope. There, however, the undaunted men from over the mountains pushed up hill once again, firing as they went.

When the battle was over, Shelby told of this second charge upward. "The mountain was covered with flame and smoke, and seemed to thunder," was his picturesque description.

Now the British had resumed their position behind the sheltering rocks, and on all sides they were beset by the grim men from Watauga and their fellows, who did not give them a moment's respite.

There was little need for commanders. Each man knew what to do, and all gave themselves to their deadly work, not with relish, but with bulldog determination.

The voice of Sevier was heard on the east:

"Now, boys, single out your men, take sure aim, and fire!"

Then, in the words of one who has described the battle, "the British went down like bent grass before a torrent of hail—they were piled in heaps, like seaweed thrown up by an ocean storm. The hill streamed red with the carnage."

The men of Ferguson's band were brave, also, and repeatedly they left their shelter and faced with their bayonets the men who opposed them, "the most powerful looking men I ever beheld," one of the soldiers, who was wounded in the battle, reported. He spoke of them as "tall, raw-boned, and sinewy," and said that they appeared like so many devils from the infernal regions, so full of excitement were they as they rushed like enraged lions up the mountain.

Half an hour passed, while the fortunes of battle were first with one side, then with the other. Up the hill the patriots went, then down again; up, then down. Some of the attackers fell, some of the defenders. Yet there came a time when it seemed that the advantage rested with the British. Some one started the cry that reënforcements for Ferguson were at hand; that the

Colonials would be crushed between the advancing host and the men with the awful knives at the top of the mountain.

This was too much for Colonel Campbell's forces. Panic-stricken, the men hurried down the mountain. Sevier, from his station close to the rocks, from which he had directed the pouring of a withering fire on the British, noted this defection. Putting spurs to his horse, he rushed after them, and stood by their commander as he tried to stem the retreating tide.

"Back, men! We cannot retreat!" he called. "We've got them; they cannot escape us. Back! Back! For your families, and for your country!"

They hesitated. Then they looked at Nolichucky Jack, whose flashing eyes and magnetic gaze were upon them. Fascinated, they turned. Then in a frenzy they rushed back up the hill, and once more fell upon the foe.

Then followed hand-to-hand conflict, to which what had gone before was as nothing. Ferguson was in the thick of the fighting. Two horses were shot under him before he received his death wound. Five of Sevier's men drew their guns on him. One of them said:

"I'll see what Sweet Lips can do to him."

The brave leader fell, mortally wounded. One of his officers raised the white flag, but this was torn down by those who wished to fight on. A second flag

was raised, and the call was made to the mountain men to cease firing.

Yet one young man would not stop. He seemed to be beside himself. Shot followed shot from his Deckard rifle.

"Cease firing! Can't you see that they have surrendered?" the appeal was made to him.

"I will not stop!" the young soldier said, as the tears rolled down his cheeks. "The rascals have killed my father, and I'll keep on shooting until I kill every one of them!"

The frantic youth was Joseph Sevier. Once more he levelled his rifle, but as he took aim he saw the father whom he thought was dead. As Colonel Sevier drew near, the lad threw down his gun, ran to the father whom he had not expected to see again, and was not ashamed to be seen with his arms about Nolichucky Jack's neck.

"That's the way we would all have felt if our Jack had been killed!" said a man who stood near the reunited father and son. "What a fortunate thing for Watauga it is that the dead man is not Colonel Sevier, but his brother Robert."

Robert Sevier alone of the seven Seviere who fought at King's Mountain was killed. All seven won glory on the field, including James Sevier, Joseph's sixteen-

year-old brother, who there made the beginning of many years of battling by his father's side.

The struggle began at three o'clock, and it was finished a few minutes after four. When the Americans were able to pause after that awful hour, they found that 28 of their number had been killed, while 60 had been wounded. But of the British forces, 225 had been killed, and 180 had been wounded. The remaining 700 of the force were prisoners. Thus there were several hundred more in the conquered force than in the company led by Sevier and Shelby and Campbell and their associates. These men had led their own mountain followers to a victory that resulted in the death knell of the hopes of Cornwallis and the British army, and paved the way for the closing scene of the Revolution at Yorktown!

There followed a terrible night on the summit of the slope where Ferguson's forces had surrendered. With the going down of the sun came stinging cold which added to the suffering of the wounded. The conquerors did all they could to relieve the situation, and so forgot much of their own anguish, as well as their anxiety lest the reënforcements for which Ferguson had been looking should come upon them in the night.

The morning brought opportunity to bury the dead. Victors and vanquished were thrown into a huge grave.

Then began the long and trying journey back to the

Watauga settlements. The difficulty of the way was just as great as when the men were seeking Ferguson. But now it was necessary to take along the prisoners, and to carry the arms of more than one thousand men which had been captured at King's Mountain. Once more rain added to privations, and food was scarce. Yet the men pushed doggedly on, climbing the mountains, pushing their way along precipitous slopes which looked far down into tree-clad valleys and across ridge rising above ridge, away into the blue distance.

When they were about forty miles on their way they halted to assist in the punishment of thirty-six Tories who had been captured while burning the houses of the settlers and murdering their wives and daughters, in fulfilment of the purpose of the British to make their name a terror through the mountains.

"We must give them a fair trial," Shelby insisted, looking sternly on the accused men. And not until after the trial was sentence of death passed on them. Sevier did not pay much attention to the fate of these men. But when two soldiers who had started out with him from Sycamore Shoals, but had deserted to the enemy, were brought into camp, he was aroused.

"But for an accident these men, who told of our coming to Ferguson, might have caused our defeat," Colonel Campbell said, as he demanded their execution. When they were convicted, he was pleased, and thought

with satisfaction of the punishment which was so surely to be theirs.

To his surprise, as well as to the astonishment of his own men, Sevier took his stand by the deserters, placed his hands on their shoulders, and said:

“Give them to me. They are my men.”

“What will you do with them?” he was asked.

“Let them go home to their wives and children,” was the reply of the great-hearted leader.

“Are you forgetting that if they had had their way, our wives would have been widows and our children fatherless?” It was one of Sevier’s own officers who asked the question.

“No, I do not forget. I can remember also what good men they are, and am assured that they will be loyal patriots from this time forward. Give them to me!”

Sevier’s power over his associates was never more apparent than in that moment. For, after a silence that seemed to promise resistance, the shackles were taken from the prisoners, and they were handed over to the man who had interceded for them.

“Chambers and Crawford,” he addressed them, “what will you do to show that you have it in you to be something better than traitors?”

“For your sake, Nolichucky Jack, we will be men!”

was the earnest reply. "Our lives are yours, and henceforth we live for you."

They kept their word. Years afterward Sevier testified that they had been true patriots, that they had won their way back into the confidence of their fellows, and that they were leaders in every movement that promised the advancement of the Watauga country.

Sevier's example had a startling effect on the angry men who had thirsted for the blood of others condemned to death. They watched with satisfaction the visitation of the extreme penalty on nine men. Then there was a pause, while the tenth man threw himself into the arms of a younger brother. The weeping of the brother moved the rough frontiersmen profoundly. As they looked on they lost taste for the continuation of the punishment, and when, after a few moments, the condemned brother broke away from the embrace, during which his bonds had been cut, and dashed into the forest, they were not only too surprised to pursue the fugitive, but they had not the heart to do so.

Noting their hesitation, Sevier stood before them and said, with great feeling:

"Hasn't this gone far enough? Let's forgive these other convicted men. Shall we not show our gratitude for the wonderful victory that has been given us by bidding these men go and sin no more?"

With a relieved shout the soldiers acclaimed their hero. "Let them go! Let them go! Hurrah for Nolichucky Jack!"

Sevier was modest, and the acclaim of the men made him seek a diversion.

"Now for home!" he called. "Colonel Shelby will take the prisoners into Virginia, and we can hurry back to our families. I fear that Oconostota and his Cherokees may take advantage of our absence to descend on the poorly guarded settlements. We have been absent twenty days, and it will be at least a week more before we can see the waters of the Nolichucky, the Watauga, and the Holston. Who is for a quick march? Remember, I can promise only hardship to those who go with me. But home is at the other end of the journey!"

Toward evening on the eighth day Sevier stopped at his log house on the Nolichucky. From the door a rough man in hunting shirt and coonskin cap rushed out to meet him.

"Thomas, is it you?" Sevier greeted him. "What is the news?"

"Nancy Ward sent me to tell you that the Creeks and Cherokees are arming for a descent on Watauga. The word has gone out among the settlers who are still at home, and they have planned for defense.

"But they have felt lost, because you were not here. Now all will be well!"

Even as he spoke a man who had recognized the leader of the ragged returning soldiers shouted:

"Nolichucky Jack has come!"

The joyful sound was taken up by a second, and a third, a fourth, and a fifth.

"Nolichucky Jack has come!"

And before ten minutes everybody in the border settlements had heard the glad news. All was well! Nolichucky Jack was at home once more!

CHAPTER XIII

ONE HUNDRED GO TO MEET ONE THOUSAND

THE glad shout that told of the homecoming of Nolichucky Jack was still resounding through the forest when Sevier and Thomas went into the house. There was time only for a brief greeting to Bonny Kate, and a moment of play with the children who were always glad to see "Daddy Jack."

"While we talk, will you get supper ready?" Sevier asked his wife. "Within an hour I must be off."

"Can't you wait one day?" Kate asked. "You are worn out by your twenty-eight days in the saddle."

"No, wife," was the firm reply. "Unless I go at once death and destruction may descend not only on you and the children, but on all the homes about us."

"But would it not be wiser to wait until you can gather a larger force than you have now?" Thomas asked, anxiously.

"We must not wait. I can start to-night with one hundred men. If word goes out that I want others to follow me, they will come. The savages may be upon us at any moment. It is my business to go to the French Broad River and keep them from crossing."

"But isn't it folly to think of going with one

hundred men into the path of ten times as many? The number may be more; I cannot tell. I only know that Nancy Ward said that a large force was coming."

"Better that one hundred should perish than that all the settlements be destroyed!" As Sevier's words were spoken there was a fine flash of courage in his eyes. "But we shall not perish. Our one hundred men will hold the savages at bay until more can come to our relief."

So Sevier paused only to eat a hasty meal, and then to give directions to the more wearied portion of his King's Mountain troops to follow him as soon as they were thoroughly rested.

"Let the word go out that Nolichucky Jack is waiting at the French Broad for men who will join him in a harder expedition than they have ever known!"

Sevier reined in his horse long enough to call out the message to Kate. He was confident not only that she would do as he asked, but also that her appeal would be effective. The Watauga men had not failed him in the past, and they would not fail him now.

Sevier was about to give rein to his horse when he saw James ride up, mounted on his own horse. The boy had inherited his father's appreciation of a fine animal, and he was proud of his steed.

"I don't want to wait for the later party, Father. Let me go with you to-night," he pleaded.

Thus James was a member of the party of one hundred horsemen that rode all that night along the track that led to the south. They went cautiously, for the enemy might appear anywhere. But they rode on without a pause until the hour for breakfast made a halt necessary.

“ We didn’t have a chance to get much food before we left the Nolichucky,” Sevier said to Thomas. “ But those who come after us will take care of that need, and we shall be all right.”

Then all day long the journey was continued. The men were weary after thirty-six hours in the saddle, but if they were tempted to fall by the wayside they needed only to look at their stalwart leader to decide to keep on a little longer.

The night found them at the point where the Indian war-path crossed the French Broad River. The enemy must approach at that point. So they could afford to rest for a night. That is, most of the men could rest. Sevier was sleepless in his determination to look out for his troops.

When volunteers were called for who would serve as scouts, so many volunteered that it was not easy to pass by any of them.

“ We need but twenty men, and sixty have offered themselves!” was the proud announcement of Sevier.

"I shall take every third man, so as to have twenty helpers who will reconnoiter while we make camp."

The scouts did not have to go far. They had been away from the camp but a little while when, from the summit of a hill, they saw before them fully a thousand Indians.

The bravery of Sevier had infected the twenty, and they paused long enough to discharge their rifles at the enemy before wheeling their horses and hurrying back to the camp on the French Broad.

"No chance for rest to-night, boys!" Sevier said to his men, when he had heard the report of the scouts. "We must be ready for the Cherokees at any moment. Let every man rest with his gun in his hand."

Anxious hours passed. There was no alarm, though more than once some man, more excitable than his fellows, started up in the belief that he had heard the expected war-whoop. The night was far spent when there was a sound of approaching horses, and the men sprang to their feet.

"They're coming from the wrong direction!" Sevier reassured them.

"Who can it be?" came the query from more than one of the soldiers.

Sevier smiled. "I can tell you without waiting to see," he declared. "The boys we left on the Noli-chucky, with instructions to rest, could not rest when

their comrades were on the march in the face of the enemy. Let's give them a real Watauga welcome!"

How the glad shout of the men in camp rang out over the river and echoed through the forest! That shout served a double purpose. Not only did it reassure the weary men who could not take their ease when danger threatened, but it struck terror to the hearts of the savages, whose spies had given information of the small company in camp on the French Broad. Surely some tremendous reënforcement had come!

At any rate, this was what Sevier concluded next day when he failed to find the enemy. The only evidence of their presence so near them was a single dead Indian, who had been killed by the scouts, and the traces of one thousand men who had disappeared.

Another night of vigil followed. Again the men rested on their arms in vain. Another day of pursuit began—one hundred and seventy men trying to find one thousand!

"But our force can lick any thousand Indians you can bring against us!" Sevier boasted, as he pursued his way, always on the lookout for the ambuscades from which he was sure the Indians would make their presence known.

As a matter of course Sevier rode with the advance guard; no one thought of urging him to seek a place of greater safety, for all understood how such a sugges-

tion would be scorned. Therefore it was Sevier who gave the first shout of discovery of an abandoned camp where the embers were still warm.

"We'll uncover them soon now!" he called to Major Jonathan Tipton, one of his aides. "Follow me with your men and I'll show you some fighting that will make you forget the toil of the last days and nights!"

Sure enough! Within a short distance a cunningly contrived ambushade was disclosed. The Indians had hidden themselves in the underbrush, spread out in a crescent. They had hoped that the whites would ride unsuspectingly into their midst, that they could fall upon them from all sides, and cut them to pieces.

Fortunately, however, a few over-anxious Indians fired too soon, and the plot was revealed. Sevier's plan was made as he rode back with his advance guard to the remainder of the force.

"Major Walton, do you wheel to the left. Major Tipton, do you wheel to the right. I'll lead my men to engage the foes on the front, while you attack them on the flank."

The plan was being carried out with precision. The Indians were falling fast, and soon would be surrounded and cut to pieces. But a chance shot hit Major Tipton, and he fell from his horse, badly wounded. The accident unnerved his men just long enough to

enable the surviving Indians to escape through the gap on their right, and on into a swamp.

Sevier ordered pursuit, which, of course, he led. More than one savage fell before his rifle, when he found himself alone, except for a giant Indian who turned upon him.

“Dragging Canoe!” Sevier said, as he recognized the implacable enemy of the settlers, the man who had opposed both the lease and the sale of lands, who had been nursing his hatred since the days of Sevier’s expedition against the outlaws of Nick-a-jack Cave.

Sevier’s rifle was empty, and before he could reload Dragging Canoe fired at him. The ball whistled by his right temple, cutting off a lock of hair as it passed. This was the nearest to a wound that the intrepid leader came in all his years of battling with the Indians!

“Death to Nolichucky Jack!” Dragging Canoe growled, as he raised his gun barrel to strike the man who faced him. But Sevier’s sword turned the gun aside for an instant. Then the two well-matched foes began a tussle that could end only with the death of one or both. First one, then the other had the advantage. Sevier was hard pressed, but confident of the result, when one of his soldiers, seeing his beloved leader’s plight, rushed to his aid, and fired the shot that ended the career of Dragging Canoe.

Most of the Indians escaped, though they left twenty-eight dead behind them.

"Yet of our men not one is dead, and but three are wounded!" Sevier announced, with gratification, after the field had been surveyed.

"The next step is to carry the war into the Indians' own country and destroy their villages. But we must wait for reënforcements, and for food supplies. Suppose we stay here where the battle was fought."

That place became known as "Hungry Camp," for the men with Sevier had no more supplies. For days they lived on dry grapes, red haws, walnuts, hickory nuts, and whatever else they could gather.

At length came the troops of Colonel Arthur Campbell. And they brought with them nothing but corn!

The hungry men made the best of the meagre fare. The corn was parched in the fire, then they ate, and were not satisfied. But it was of no use to wait longer; they must go forward to find food in the Indian country.

There were now seven hundred men under Sevier's direction. "At any time we may be faced by ten times our number of desperate savages, led probably by Tory or even British officers. But we must go forward!"

"Forward with Nolichucky Jack!" again the cry was raised. And the march began.

The journey was uneventful until they came to the

point on the Little Tennessee River where was located the chief Cherokee town, Echota. Scouts told of one thousand Indians who were guarding the ford that led to the town. Therefore Sevier gave directions to cross the river two miles lower down. This movement was not discovered by the Indians until they were attacked in the rear. Terrorized by the unexpected approach of a force led by the man of whom they had a superstitious dread, they fled in a body, and did not pause until they found shelter in the mountains.

Thus Echota, the sacred city of the Cherokees, their city of refuge, was at the mercy of Sevier's men. They entered the irregular streets, saw the scores of log cabins and conical wigwams, built by the side of the river. There was no one to hinder their passage to the lodges, with entrances closed by buffalo hides, and apertures in the roofs through which the smoke from fires built on the ground could find a vent. The skins and buffalo robes which served as bedding were still on the ground; the departing Indians had not waited to roll them into the mats which served as furniture during the day.

"Let no one touch these houses!" Sevier warned. "Echota is the home of our friend, Nancy Ward. To her we owe more than one warning that has saved us from surprise by the Cherokees. For her sake the vil-

lage will be found exactly as it was when her people left so hurriedly."

But there was no such reason for sparing other villages. The safety of the settlers required that these be destroyed. So all the villages of the Cherokees, except Echota, were burned. The crops were destroyed, as well as corn in the granary, while the cattle were killed, and nothing was left for food or shelter during the approaching winter.

"It is hard to think of the privations of the women and children," Sevier said, with regret. "But if we do not give the savages a lesson we must pay the penalty, and our women and children will suffer more than hunger and cold."

The expedition of destruction led still farther south. The Indians who lived on the Tellico and the Hiwassee lost their homes, and the Chickamauga towns on the Tennessee followed. The Indians and the outlaws with them fled to Nick-a-jack Cave, where they would be compelled to remain during the long winter.

Then the path of the destroyers led into Georgia, until fifty towns in all had been burned, and forty thousand people were homeless. Everywhere the fields were burned, and the Creeks joined with the Cherokees in execrating Nolichucky Jack, whom it was useless for them to think of resisting.

At length, when there were no more villages to

burn, Sevier and his men returned to Echota. There they paused while Sevier wrote an address to the Indians, which was signed by Major Martin, and Colonel Campbell, as well as by himself. This was sent by an Indian who, it was certain, would make it known to all the Cherokees and the Creeks.

This is what they read:

“Chiefs and Warriors:

“We came into your country to fight your young men; we have killed not a few of them, and destroyed your Towns. You know you began the War by listening to the bad counsels of the King of England and the falsehoods told you by his Agents. We are now satisfied with what is done, as it may convince your nation, that we can distress them much at any time they are so foolish as to engage in War against us. If you desire peace, as we understand you do, we out of pity to your Women and Children are disposed to treat with you on that subject and take you into friendship once more.

“We therefore send you this, by one of your young men, who is our prisoner, to tell you, if you are also disposed to make peace, for six of your Head Men to come to our agent, Major Martin, at the Great Island within two moons; they will have a safe transport if they will notify us of their approach by a runner with a Flag, so as to give time to meet them with a guard on

the Holston River at the boundary line. The wives and children of those of your men who Protested against the War, if they are willing to take refuge at the Great Island until peace is restored, we will give a supply of provisions to keep them alive. Warriors, listen attentively.

“ If we receive no answer to this message until the time already mentioned expires, we shall conclude that you intend to continue to be our enemies, which will compel us to send another strong force into your Country, who will come prepared to stay a long time and take possession thereof as conquered by us, without making any restitution to you for your lands.

“ Signed at Kai-a-tee, the 4th day of January, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty-one.”

The response to the address was prompt. About two hundred Cherokees, led by Hanging Maw, John Watts, and Noonday, came to Echota. Peace with the Ottari Cherokees resulted. Prisoners were exchanged, so that women and children who had been a long time among the Indians were restored to their homes.

The work he had set himself having been accomplished, Sevier dismissed the soldiers, and returned to his home on the banks of the Nolichucky, and to Bonny Kate and the children.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST OF OCONOSTOTA

WHEN Sevier returned from his successful expedition against the Cherokees and the Creeks, he was greeted by a letter announcing that the General Assembly of North Carolina had voted to send him a sword and a pair of pistols, in recognition of his effective leadership at King's Mountain.

"I think it is high time some one was taking notice of you, John," Catharine Sevier said to him when he told her of the letter. "It is a surprise to me that a man who does as much as you do for other people has been allowed to go so long without a word of praise."

"That's all right, Kate," was the hero's comment. "I'd keep on doing things for the country even if nothing were said or done. It is enough to know that I am working with and for my friends."

The wife's loyalty found utterance once more. "I'd have liked it better if the sword and the pistols had come with the letter," she said. "I'll believe in the gratitude of North Carolina when the things are here in the house."¹

¹Thirty-two years passed before the promised recognition was in Sevier's possession. On July 17, 1813, Governor Hawkins of North Carolina wrote:

"Permit me, sir, to make you an expression of the high

A few weeks after the receipt of the letter concerning the sword, a messenger brought word of Sevier's appointment as Colonel Commandant of Washington County, which had succeeded the Washington District, as well as of a second resolution adopted by the General Assembly. This stated that the body was "feelingly impressed with the very generous and patriotic service rendered," and expressed the hope that there would be a continuance of the same exertions.

"That sounds well, but I would feel better pleased if they had asked you to give an account of your expenditures in equipping troops and carrying on your campaigns." The failure to receive the promised sword and pistols was rankling in the heart of Catharine Sevier, and she persisted in her grumbling.

"That is all right, Kate," Sevier assured her. "We

gratification felt by me at being the favored instrument to present to you, in the name of the State of North Carolina, this testimonial of gratitude, this meed of valor, and to remark that, contesting as we are at the present time with the same foe for our just rights, the pleasing hope may be entertained that the valorous deeds of the heroes of the Revolution will animate the soldier of the existing war, and nerve his arm in laudable emulation to like achievements."

To this message Sevier, who was never a man to treasure a slight, responded:

"With that memorable day began to shine and beam forth the glorious prospects of our America's struggle. In those trying days I was governed by love and regard for my common country, and particularly for the State I then had the honor of serving, and in its welfare and prosperity I shall never cease to feel an interest. I was then ready to hazard everything dear to me to secure our independence; I am now as willing to risk all to retain it."

must remember that North Carolina is poor. I have been glad to lay everything I have at the service of those who need me, and I do not expect any financial return. Let's be satisfied with what they are doing."

"Satisfied with what they are doing, indeed!" Catharine's eyes flashed. "What have they done but say: 'Good boy, Jack; we are glad you could help so much with your time and your money. It is fine to have you fight along on your own hook. Now be a little man, and increase our debt to you by helping us out in other difficulties.'"

"Go along, Kate!" was Sevier's laughing comment. "You know you are glad as I am to help our country."

"You are always generous, Jack. And your last act is just like you. I'm thinking of those thirty women and children, released from captivity among the Indians, for whom you made a place in our home for weeks, and of the men whom you have asked to stay with us indefinitely. What a household Jack Sevier has!

"Don't bother about what I say," the wife concluded. "We're all proud of you, and I am glad to be your partner in your helpful life. It is so good to have you at home. Do you think you can stay for a little while?"

"I am afraid not." Sevier showed his perplexity as he spoke. "I wish I could go over the mountains

once more, and help in the fight against Cornwallis, but I am afraid this is impossible. You see, Cornwallis wants to keep us from making another expedition like that of King's Mountain. So he has been seeking Tories to stir up the Indians again. He thinks we will have to go against these savages, and that we cannot then interfere with him."

"What have you heard, Father?" James, who was already Sevier's right-hand man, had been listening to the conversation, and now, for the first time, his voice was heard.

"You remember how the Indians agreed at Echota that they would keep the peace. But some of them have been made discontented by the agents of the British. Nancy Ward sends word that Old Tassel, John Watts, Noonday, and Hanging Maw are doing their best to get them to behave. Oconostota is the leader of the other party, which says that the settlers must be driven out from the lands which the Cherokees sold to them. He knows that the only sure way to drive us out is to kill us. So his daring plan is to come up here and tomahawk every one of us."

"But I thought the Cherokees could not take the field again until new crops were grown!" James objected.

"That is what we thought. But we did not destroy the villages or the crops of the Erati Cherokees. They

have offered to share what they have with their brothers, the Ottari, if they will join the twelve hundred fighting men of the Erati."

"That seems a foolish thing for the poor Indians to do, Father. The result of a battle is sure if you are the leader."

"What does Cornwallis care?" Sevier asked. "It is enough for him that the Indians are keeping us from joining the patriots who are making his days so miserable. What difference is it to him if a thousand or two Indians rush to their death?"

Soon the advance guard of the Erati were making raids on the settlements, burning houses, and killing men, women and children. For a time Sevier was so busy in arranging for fighting men to protect the outposts that he could not think of carrying the war into the country of the enemy.

Yet after a time he realized that, until he led an expedition into the strongholds of these Erati, there could be no relief from them.

"But how can we find our way to the fastnesses of the Great Smoky Mountains, where the Eratis live?" James asked his father.

"If the thing is to be done, it can be done!" came the determined reply. "If we have to go to the Great Smokies, to the Great Smokies we must go!"

"You talk as if the journey were a mere holiday

trip." Mrs. Sevier smiled affectionately as she seemed to object. "And I think it will be a sort of holiday to your father, James; he likes nothing better than to do something hard for his neighbors."

Sevier talked of his plan to Isaac Thomas, but at first the trader shook his head.

"I do not know of more than three or four men who have ever been among the Erati," he said, in explanation of his feeling that the trip was impossible. "It is true that I have been there, but I made the journey by the much easier route through the Indian country to the south. If you go, you must cross the wild mountain country, swimming rivers, climbing almost precipitous crags, and crossing over passes where an ambuscade might destroy you at any moment."

"How far are we to travel?" Sevier's question took the journey for granted; his only concern was as to ways and means. "Two hundred miles, you say? Then it is fortunate that we shall have but one hundred and thirty men with us."

"Do you expect to face the twelve hundred Erati mountaineers with such a puny force?" Thomas asked, in surprise.

"We cannot spare more from guarding the outposts, Thomas. But if you will go with us, we can face the perils of the way. And we shall return victorious!"

Arrangements were completed speedily, and soon

after the first of March, 1781, the company set out into unknown country. Thomas' services as guide were limited to his general knowledge of the manner of facing difficulties in a rough country; he knew nothing of the surroundings from experience.

Under Sevier's leadership, the troops which—as usual—had been equipped by the generous man from Watauga, crossed swollen rivers, cut a path through thick forests, and climbed difficult peaks. A slip along a perilous track, far above some mountain stream, was an everyday occurrence. Nothing was thought of braving the current of an unknown stream, where the horses swam for their lives, and, in spite of every effort, were compelled to land a quarter of a mile down stream from the spot where the water was entered.

At length these more dangerous regions were left behind, and the beautiful country through which flows the Swannanoa was entered.

“It looks as if our troubles were over,” Sevier remarked to Thomas.

Soon, however, he learned his error. More mountain wildernesses were before them. Up, up, ever up the devoted men made their way. By this time their food supplies were almost exhausted. Their parched corn was supplemented by the flesh of the deer and the bear, or by fish from mountain streams.

“I must climb one of these mountains,” Sevier

said to Thomas. Probably from the summit I can see some of the villages of the Erati."

"Which mountain will you choose?" Thomas asked. "They are all about us. Did you ever see anything so magnificent? We can count fifteen or twenty that must be more than a mile high. See what bald summits they have! I have been up one of them. The balsam grows to within a short distance of the top. Then, as if the wind had triumphed over them, the balsams give way to the finest grass meadows, hundreds of acres in extent."

"This is the summit I want to climb." Sevier pointed to the stupendous bulk of Clingman's Dome. "I think it is higher than its neighbors. Let's make for it."

At the foot of the mountain most of the men were left behind. With Thomas and a few companions Sevier, on foot, toiled up the long slope, through the forests, and on to the meadows which make it bald at the summit. This they reached by nightfall.

When the next day dawned, the climbers stood entranced. What a tremendous view was spread out beyond and below! To the north they saw the valley of east Tennessee, where the French Broad, the Holston, and the Nolichucky flow among the hills. Away to the east and the northeast were the Bald, the Black, the Balsam, the Cowie, and the Nantahala ranges, while to the south the Tuckaseegee River, the Nantahala

River and the Little Tennessee River wound back into the mysterious region down toward the South Carolina border.

At first there was no sign of life. But after a while Thomas pointed to a thin column of smoke near the foot of the mountain on which they stood.

"There is a village" he declared, with delight. "When we reach it, I think I will know where I am, and I can guide you the rest of the way."

The village looked to be very close, but much of the hardest kind of climbing separated the force at the foot of the mountain from their objective.

After weary hours Tuckaseegee, the village sought, was at hand. The approach of Sevier and his men was not discovered until they burst out of the forest into the village, shouting their piercing battle yell.

The panic-stricken Indians gave one glance at the invaders, then rushed away into the forest, shouting as they went:

"Nolichucky Jack! Nolichucky Jack!"

The cry was taken up by women and children, and in a moment the entire population of the village was seeking safety in flight.

Sevier and his men followed hard after them, and succeeded in destroying fifty of the men. The women and children, they made prisoners.

The panic spread to other villages. The whole

country was deserted soon, except for Sevier's little company. A score of undefended villages were set on fire. Crops were destroyed, and the country was left desolate.

"It is not easy to do this to a beautiful country." Sevier spoke with sadness, as he viewed the devastation. "But what are we to do? This is the only way to protect ourselves from the savages, who will not keep faith with us."

The return journey was made in safety. Twenty-nine days after the log cabin on the Nolichucky had been left behind, its welcoming smoke was seen once more.

One hundred and thirty men had set out on what was perhaps the most venturesome expedition of Sevier's career. And one hundred and thirty men returned. The conquest of the Erati had not caused death or injury to any of the party!

Even among the pioneers who were accustomed to Sevier's deeds of heroism there was wonder. On March 31, 1781, Joseph Martin, Indian agent, wrote to Governor Thomas Jefferson of Virginia:

"Since writing last to your Excellency, Col. Sevier returned from an Expedition against the Middle Settlements of the Cherokee Indians; he killed about fifty. Brought nine prisoners which he has given unto my charge. Burnt twenty Towns and Took about Two hundred horses."

For a little while after the return of the victorious company it was necessary to continue the guards on the frontiers of the settlements, because of the coming of hostile parties of the Erati. But soon these ceased entirely. The Indians were growing weary of the hopeless conflict.

Oconostota tried vainly to spur his people on to continue their forays, but after a time he lost his influence. No one would listen to him as he made his demands for the blood of the settlers.

Finally came this word from Nancy Ward:

“Oconostota has been deposed from the kingship. Old Tassel, a peace advocate, has taken his place. You need not fear the broken old man.”

“Now we can go over the mountains to help against Cornwallis!” was Sevier’s comment on the welcome news. So he rested from his labors against the Indians by leading two hundred riflemen to help General Marion in his efforts to keep the British from overrunning South Carolina. That service was distinguished by many exploits. Of these perhaps the greatest was the capture, by Shelby and Sevier, who were at the head of five hundred horsemen, of a British force much superior, which threatened their communications with Marion. Although this force was well entrenched, they managed to secure the surrender of the entire command, with all the supplies. The fame of the “yell-

ing devils" from beyond the mountains had reached to the British regulars, and they chose to yield rather than face the knives and tomahawks and the deadly rifles of those who had won the battle at King's Mountain.

"Have you cannon?" the British commander asked, when his surrender was demanded.

Now Sevier and Shelby had nothing larger than their rifles. But why own this?

"We have guns enough to blow you to atoms!" came the reply that led the commander of the British force to decide that surrender was better than death.

CHAPTER XV

NOLICHUCKY JACK'S PEOPLE REFUSE TO BE GIVEN AWAY

"WHAT a glad day the Fourth of July will be this year!" James Sevier said to his father, one day in June, 1784. "The country is free from Great Britain, and the Indians have been kept from burning our homes."

"We shall have another reason for rejoicing on that day, I feel certain," Jack Sevier declared. "Surely the North Carolina General Assembly will see the justice of doing something for our protection. If we are to help ourselves against the bandits and other bad men who are coming into our settlements, we must have courts. We need a real government, with the State we have defended behind us at all times. Now that the war with Great Britain has been won they will be able to look after our needs."

Charles Robertson, who was spending a few days in the Sevier home, agreed with his host. "They can't do less for us who have held the gateways of the Alleghanies during the long years of war. What would have happend if the Indians had broken through! But—thanks to you, Jack!— this country has been saved for North Carolina and for the nation. And the cost

to her has been nothing, because you and Shelby have carried the burden."

But bewildering news was brought the very day after this confident conversation at Sevier's home. A messenger came from east of the mountains with the information that the General Assembly, instead of arranging for the welfare of her Watauga people, had ceded to the United States the entire territory between the mountains and the Mississippi River!

"Why was this done?" James Sevier asked his father, after he had read the dispatches that told of the action of the General Assembly.

"Because North Carolina thought this the easiest way to pay her portion of the country's war debt! Money has been scarce for several years. You remember how, even two years ago, it was necessary to pay the legislature in corn. The people were desperate when they thought of what they might be called on to do for the national treasury, so they jumped at the chance to give to Congress the right to all of the Tennessee country, including our own lands."

"But what right had they to do it?" Stockley Donelson asked. "These are our lands. We have bought them from the Indians. We have defended them at our own expense. And now they give us away."

"Perhaps we shall be better off, though," James

Sevier suggested. "Maybe Congress will take care of us as North Carolina never did."

"That is what North Carolina says to us, although we were asking her help," Jack Sevier said, as he shook his head sadly. "'We won't do anything for you,'" is the meaning of her message. "'Congress can help you. Ask that body to protect you from the Indians and from the Tories and criminals.'"

"How soon do you think Congress will do anything?" Donelson asked.

"There is the difficulty!" Sevier turned to the document in his hands which told of the action of North Carolina. "The deed which gives us away says that Congress has one year to decide whether to accept or not. If the gift is not accepted within that time, we go back to North Carolina."

"Then we are to be at least twelve months without protection and help! Before that time the Indians might burn our homes, and the Tories might steal all our cattle!"

"You forget Father, Mr. Donelson!" Loyal James reminded the speaker.

"But it isn't fair for us to count on him always. He ought to have some help from the State which he has served so faithfully, to which he has given so generously."

"And I doubt my ability to do for Watauga what

the settlers need to-day," Sevier put in, modestly. "Always you men have done wonderfully in coming when it was necessary to go out against the Indians. But now we have worse foes than Indians to fight; these rascally, lawless men who have come among us from North Carolina. Then my property is almost gone, and I could not equip another expedition just now."

While Sevier was speaking, Donelson had been examining the letter in which the bad news had come. At length he turned wrathfully to the little company which had gathered about Sevier's doorway.

"Here is something that is far worse than anything we have yet heard. During the debate in the General Assembly, when objection was made by some to giving us away, the day was won by a legislator who said: 'The inhabitants of the western country are the off-scourings of the earth, fugitives from justice, and we will be rid of them at any rate.'"

The words were received by the listeners with a growl of resentment. At once several of the men rushed away to tell the bitter news to others. Within twenty-four hours, through their activity and that of others to whom the message was passed, the tidings of what North Carolina had done to her loyal citizens on the Watauga, the Holston, and the Nolichucky was known

to most of the thirty thousand people who lived within the territory that centred about the house of Jack Sevier.

Many of those who heard were jubilant; they felt that they could go on with their lawless deeds since there would be no one to curb them. But many others spoke sorrowfully of the disaster.

"There's nothing now but to take what we have been refused," declared one of the most bitter of the critics of North Carolina. "If they won't give us a government, let us make a government of our own."

"But who will lead us in this day of our need?" it was asked.

Instantly came the reply:

"Who but Nolichucky Jack? He has not failed us yet, and he will not fail us now."

Scores of conversations of the same kind bore fruit within a few weeks. On August 23, 1784, forty delegates elected by the people met at the log courthouse in Jonesboro, while several thousand excited men gathered under the trees about the building in the depression in the hills where Jonesboro is located. As word came to this waiting multitude of what was going on in the building their excitement increased. It rose to fever heat when they learned that William Cocke, holding up a copy of the Declaration of Independence, had declared that the three western counties had the same reasons for separating themselves from North

Carolina that the Colonies had for severing relations with Great Britain.

“This is our Independence Day!” some one in the crowd shouted. The cry was taken up, and when it was learned that the convention—of which John Sevier was president—had determined to form a State government, and seek admission into the Union, there was great jubilation.

When the forty men adjourned, the report of their action was read from the courthouse steps, so that all could hear.

“And it is ordered that fifteen delegates be chosen by the people, who are to decide on a Constitution and organize the new government,” the message from the steps concluded.

Excitement increased as the weeks passed. The delegates were chosen, and the determination to stand alone grew stronger every day. In December the delegates met at Jonesboro. Again John Sevier was president. The State of Franklin was organized, a Declaration of Independence was adopted, and a temporary constitution for the State was planned.

In the meantime the lawmakers of North Carolina were becoming alarmed. They thought that perhaps they had gone too far. They even took back the gift of the western lands, of which Watauga was a part. One of the arguments in favor of their action was that

Congress had not arranged to give North Carolina credit for the expense of her Indian expeditions.

"And Jack Sevier paid the cost of many of the expeditions!" was Landon Carter's indignant comment, when he heard of this fault found with Congress by North Carolina.

"You can have your court, your government, and everything you need," the North Carolina Assembly said to the people of the Watauga country. "You can have a militia, with John Sevier as brigadier-general. You are to be called the Washington District of North Carolina. Your future is with us, and we want you."

"Why didn't they say so a year ago?" one of the settlers asked, with contempt. "Now it is too late. The steps we have taken cannot be recalled."

Sevier pleaded with his neighbors to accept the propositions made by North Carolina. He was convinced that to remain with the old State was to the interest of those to whom so many promises had been made.

But he pleaded in vain. "We have gone too far to turn back," was the universal expression of feeling. "And you, Jack Sevier, must go with us in the State of Franklin."

Finally Sevier gave way to the pleas of his old associates. "I have been dragged with the State of Franklin by a large number of people," he said.

Having made his decision, he gave himself with all his heart to the venture. When the first General Assembly of Franklin met at Jonesboro in March, 1785, he was elected Governor. No other man was suggested.

"We want Nolichucky Jack!" was the people's cry, which the Assembly was glad to heed.

"You have stood by me, and I'll stand by you," was, in effect, the promise of the man who had led the settlers with such success in so many battles with the Indians.

The salary of the new governor was to be two hundred pounds a year. But this sum was not to be paid in currency, for there was little currency in the State; it was to be paid in articles collected as taxes, and taxes were to be paid in goods, according to a strange standard. Good flax linen was to be received at three shillings per yard; tow linen, at one shilling and ninepence; linsey, at three shillings; good, clean bear skins, at six shillings; cased otter skins, at six shillings; "raccoon" and fox skins at one shilling and threepence; bacon, well cured, at sixpence per pound; deer skins, at six shillings. Many other articles were valued in this "coon-skin currency," as it came to be called.

This currency served until the proud day when thirty thousand silver dollars were made by Charles Robertson. Even then the old makeshift currency continued to be helpful.

Governor Sevier was an active leader. He organized the courts; he made provision for the safety and the comfort of the people; he started an academy which, later, became Washington College, the oldest college west of the mountains; and he organized the militia, so that the threats of Creeks and Cherokees could be heard without fear.

North Carolina looked on with determination to bring back, if necessary by force, those who had rebelled against her authority.

“And Congress wants us back!” Landon Carter said to Sevier one day after the Governor had been announcing a new law to the people, according to his custom, from the steps of the Jonesboro courthouse. “They are asking North Carolina to give again what they promised once, and then claimed as their own.

“But why should Congress ask North Carolina for us? North Carolina gave us away. Congress did not accept the gift. We belonged to nobody. So we have organized a government of our own, and now we belong to the State of Franklin.

“Now let neither Congress nor North Carolina try to force us to do their will. We are free men, and we will go our way.”

CHAPTER XVI

OLD TASSEL LEARNS HIS LESSON

GOVERNOR SEVIER had been so busy planning for the welfare of the State of Franklin that he had almost forgotten about the danger from the Indians. But he had an unpleasant reminder when a gaunt mountaineer entered Jonesboro one morning and sought him as he came from a talk with the treasurer of the State of Franklin about some fine furs which had been secured as taxes.

The man, who introduced himself as Neil Anderson, had a tale of danger and suffering to relate.

"I was down on the French Broad, hunting deer," the story began. "I was stalking a fine buck when I heard a sort of hacking noise up in a tree above my head. I forgot about the buck, and got in the underbrush and listened. Soon I saw, way up in the tree, a Cherokee who was cutting around the bark. What he was doing didn't occur to me, but I sort of thought that wasn't a healthy place for me, and I crawled off until I thought I could safely come out in the open. But just then I heard that same hacking sound up a second tree. If there wasn't another Indian, cutting around the bark of a hickory! Again I thought I'd

better find a place I didn't have to sheer with a redskin. But I was in a perfect nest of them. Soon I was under still another tree, where a Cherokee was hacking away at the bark.

"Then I knew what the hacking meant. Those Indians were marking off logs for canoes! 'What do they want of so many canoes?' I thought to myself. Then it came to me that they must be getting ready for a little war party of some sort.

"Time for me to make myself scarce, wa'n't it? That is what I tried to do. But just then I looked up to find three redskins right on me. Before I could make a move they grabbed me, tied me up proper, and made me go ahead of them until we came to one of their villages.

"When we got there, there was a lot of painted savages sitting about a council fire. I was taken into the circle. Then there was a sort of palaver. I couldn't make out what they was gruntin' about, until it came to me that some didn't want me killed, and some of the rest was thirstin' for my blood. A big chief in the centre of the circle took a war club and gave it to the Indian who sat by the door. Then the rest of the redskins passed out, and the club was given to them. Some knocked the war club against the ground, but some passed it on to the next man without doing anything with it. As near as I could make out, the men who

struck with the club wanted me killed, and the others said to let me live. The chief kept a tally of the votes on a piece of wood. When all had gone out, I saw that most of them wanted to burn me at the stake.

“When all the redskins had their votes on the stick, the old chief began to argue with them. What he said I couldn’t tell. He talked in a low voice as if he was scared of something. I couldn’t understand a thing he said, though there was one word that he kept repeating. This word was ‘Ustutli.’ When he used it his voice sounded as if he was afraid. At first the redskins seemed to be arguing with him, as if they wanted their way, and were afraid they would not get it. After a bit they began to nod their heads. Then they talked about ‘Ustutli,’ whatever that is.

“What meant most to me was that the chief spoke to my guards, who unbound me. Then they took me to the next village. While they were on the way I made out that they were about to go on the warpath.

“After a while, when I saw a good chance, I ducked to one side of the path. They chased me, but I got clean away.

“And here I am, after three days in the forest.

“But what bothers me is that ‘Ustutli.’ What does that word mean, anyway?”

One of the interested listeners to Anderson’s report

was Isaac Thomas, the trapper who had lived among the Cherokees so long that he understood their language.

“ I know ‘ Ustutli,’ ” he said. “ Want to hear a story that explains why the old chief seemed afraid? His fear was not cowardice, but only superstition.

“ There was once a great serpent called the Ustutli, that made its haunt upon a high mountain. It did not glide like other snakes, but had its feet at each end of the body, and moved by strides or jerks, like a great measuring worm; hence the name which means ‘ foot suck.’ It had no legs, but could raise itself up on its hind feet, with its snaky head waving high in the air until it found a good place to take a fresh hold; then it would bend down and grip its front feet to the ground while it drew its body up from behind. It could cross rivers and deep ravines by throwing its head across and getting a grip with its front feet and then swinging its body over. Wherever its footprints were found there was danger. It used to bleat like a young fawn, and when the hunter heard a fawn bleat in the woods he never looked for it, but hurried away in the other direction.

“ It came to pass that not a hunter would venture near the mountains for dread of Ustutli. At last a man from one of the northern settlements came down to visit some relatives in the neighborhood. When he arrived they made a feast for him, but had only corn

and beans, and excused themselves for having no meat because the hunters were afraid to go into the mountains. He asked the reason, and when they told him he said he would go himself and either bring home the deer or find Ustutli. They tried to dissuade him, but as he insisted upon going they warned him that if he heard a fawn bleat in the thicket he must run at once, and if the snake ran after him he must not try to run down the mountain, but along the side of the ridge, where the snake could not go, since the great weight of its swinging head broke its hold on the ground when it moved sideways.

“In the morning, at the base of the mountain, the hunter heard a fawn bleat. He knew at once that it was Ustutli, but he had made up his mind to see it, so he did not turn back, but went straight forward, and there, sure enough, was the monster with its head high in the air, looking in every direction to discover its breakfast. It saw the hunter and made for him, moving in jerking strides, every one the length of a tree trunk.

“The hunter lost his wits and started to run directly up the mountain. The great snake came after him, gaining half its length on him every time it took a fresh grip with its fore feet, and would have caught the hunter before he reached the top of the ridge, but that he suddenly remembered the warning and changed

his course to run along the side of the mountain. At once the snake began to lose ground. The hunter went over the top of the mountain, and down to its base. Then he set fire to the grass and the leaves. Soon the fire went up the mountain. When the snake smelled the smoke and saw the flames it turned toward a high cliff. It reached the rock and stood up on it, but the fire followed and caught the dead pines down the base of the cliff, until the heat made Ustutli's scales crack. Taking a close grasp of the rock with its hind feet it raised its body and put forth all its strength in an effort to spring across the wall of fire that surrounded it, but the smoke choked it and its hold loosened and it fell among the blazing pine trunks and lay there until it was burned to ashes.

“ But the Cherokees believe that the spirit of Ustutli still walks on the mountain. Woe to the brave who hears the bleating of the fawn that announces the coming of the spirit. A spell is thrown over the brave, and misfortune will come to him unless, that very day, he denies himself some great pleasure.

“ Evidently the chief whose words resulted in setting Anderson free thought he had heard Ustutli's spirit. If so, the captive owed his life to the chief's superstition. The first great pleasure that came his way was the torture of this captive. By influencing the braves about the council fire to let Anderson go he

thought he could overcome the power of the spirit of Ustutli."

Sevier turned to a companion, who had listened to Anderson's story, as well as to the explanation given by Thomas. This companion was David Campbell, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Franklin.

"We must not lose any time, Campbell," Sevier said, decisively. "If we are to save the settlements from a raid, we ought to get the chiefs of the Cherokees together and make a treaty of peace with them."

"But do you forget that Congress only has the right to make treaties? The States have surrendered this right. And if we hope to have Congress admit the State of Franklin to the Union we ought not to do what will make that body angry."

"Yet North Carolina is talking of doing just what we plan; the province is planning to make a treaty with the chiefs of Creeks and Cherokees. I don't see why we shouldn't get ahead of North Carolina. It is the only way to save us from the results of Spain's efforts to stir up the Indians against us, so that they may get this country, and of North Carolina's attempts to have them drive our people from the lands down on the French Broad and the Holston, where they say we should not be."

"Some of the settlers are not in the State of Frank-

lin," Campbell objected. "Then why are you so anxious to look out for them? Haven't you enough to bother you here at home?"

"No, I must take care of the men who have taken up land farther south," Sevier replied. "Many of them were my comrades at King's Mountain. Shall I forsake to the Indians some who fought by my side, who helped win the freedom we now enjoy?"

The way of the men of Franklin was made more difficult just at this time by a proclamation in which the Governor of North Carolina ordered the removal of all settlers on lands south of the French Broad and the Holston. To Old Tassel, one of the Cherokee chiefs, he called these settlers bad people, who were willing to harm the Indians for the sake of gain.

This was a wonderful preparation for the council which was held for three days, beginning May 31, 1785, on Dumplin Creek, near the French Broad River. The spot chosen may be found to-day by those who go to a point about ten miles east of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Sevier's power over the Indians was never better seen than at this conference. Their dread of him was evident. But their respect for him and their belief in him were also evident. He won them as he spoke of his sorrow for all the misunderstandings between the Indians and the whites.

"If you will agree not to trouble those who are

now on the lands which you claim as your own, we will agree that no one shall go farther south, without your permission. If you keep your part of the bargain, you will be paid for the lands you are now giving up."

Sevier's spirit was shown in a letter he sent, on July 19, 1785, to Governor Patrick Henry, of Virginia, in which he told of the Council and of events which followed. He wrote:

"The people of the western waters in North Carolina, for many reasons, have formed themselves into a new State by the name of Franklin, and have appointed me their Governor. The appointment has brought a conference with a famous leader of the Chickasaws, who came into the State a few days ago, in order to solicit a trade with this part of the country.

"I will have them all well used, and Encouraged a few honest people to return with them and take down a few Goods . . . I will beg leave to inform your Excellency that I am taking every measure in my power to prevent Encroachments on the Indians' land. This, however, is a difficult task, because North Carolina actually sold the land up to their Towns. I have fixed a temporary line, as far as people are settled, and none shall settle over it until it can be done by mutual agreement.

"Although we have been forced by measures of safety from North Carolina, I think it necessary to

inform you that we will, on no account, encourage any part of the people of your State to join us, nor shall we receive any of them unless by consent of your State. We reverence the Virginians, and are confident the Legislature here will, at all times, do everything to merit their esteem.

“I do not expect your Excellency to correspond with us until our Government is recognized by Congress . . . We hope soon to convince all that we are not a banditti, but a people who aim to do right.”

The charge that the people of Franklin were bandits was made by some of their enemies in North Carolina, who told Old Tassel that the treaty made by them was not worth anything, since North Carolina had not consented to the organization of the State of Franklin. The chief, who had not been in favor of the treaty of Dumplin Creek, called a council of chiefs who were to talk over ways to make that treaty useless.

After the council Old Tassel sent to the Governor of North Carolina a letter in which he said:

“We are very uneasy on account of a report that is among the white people that call themselves a new people, that live on French Broad and Nolichucky. They say they have treated with us for all the lands on Little River.”

Then he went on to tell how the agreement at Dumplin Creek was made with a group of young men,

who had no right to say what should be done. He appealed to the Governor of North Carolina to move the white settlers off his lands.

This letter from Old Tassel was sent to Congress. That body sent men who made the treaty of Hopewell, which gave to the Indians miles of the land they had sold to the settlers, as well as some land they had never claimed as their own. If the whites settled on these lands, the Indians were to be allowed to punish them as they thought best.

When the news was brought to Sevier, he said, with sorrow :

“ Unless I help the settlers, they will be killed. And if I do help them, I become a rebel, not only against North Carolina, but against Congress.”

Before long the good Indian fighter had to act. Lesser chiefs urged Old Tassel to take the field against the settlers.

“ We do not have to fear Nolichucky Jack now,” they said. “ He has lost his power, and he can do nothing against us.”

Fortunately for Sevier, when the Cherokees went on the war-path, they did not go against the settlers in the region decided to be theirs by the treaty of Hopewell; instead, they went north to those living on lands which were agreed by all the whites to belong to the Watauga settlers.

At once word was sent to Nolichucky Jack, who was eighty miles away:

“Come and help us! Old Tassel and his redskins are among us, killing, burning and torturing. We need you! We know you will not fail us.”

“Tell them I am coming!” the dependable man said. “No, don’t tell them, either. I’ll be there before any message can reach them. My good horse will take me to them in a few hours.”

With a number of companions, he was on his way in an hour after the appeal came to him. As he went, he asked others to join him. The men responded with their usual alacrity, so that, when Nolichucky Jack reached the scene of conflict near the Little Tennessee, he had one hundred and sixty men with him.

“Men, I am not planning to lead you against those who have been giving trouble to the settlements. We have passed them by. With five hundred hostile Indians behind us, I call on you to go with me to the Indian towns on the Tellico.

“There is danger where we go. Twenty-five hundred warriors will be before us. The mountain country is difficult, and we may be shot from ambush. It is only fair, then, that I should give those who feel that they had better go home the chance to step out of line. No one will question their decision.”

A moment Sevier waited. No one moved. He

waited two minutes, three minutes, five minutes. Still no one moved.

Then there was a shout:

“Nolichucky Jack! Nolichucky Jack! We go where he leads!”

Then followed another of Sevier's spectacular raids. He fell on the Indian towns on the Hiwassee. When these were destroyed, the Indians fled into the forest.

The return journey through the Great Smoky Mountains was made without event, though one thousand Indians under the chief John Watts were waiting for them. Not a man, not even a horse, was lost on the way.

In the meantime the Indians who had attacked the settlements heard of what Sevier had done to their towns. In a panic they left the places where they had made themselves a terror, and rode homeward.

One of Sevier's brigadiers, General Cocke, was sent to Old Tassel to demand that he punish the Indians who had killed some of the settlers at the beginning of the raid. The old chief pretended to know nothing of them. So Cocke went among the Indian villages. In one village two of the murderers were recognized. They were killed, and their property was destroyed.

“We can't go against Nolichucky Jack,” Old Tassel mourned. “He is everywhere, he can see everything, and he can do anything. We must make no more war.”

CHAPTER XVII

WHEN NOLICHUCKY JACK WAS ACCUSED OF TREASON

"MOTHER, Father wants to know if you can be ready to entertain Judge Campbell and Landon Carter to-night. He wants to bring them home for a long talk."

Thus James Sevier prepared the way for an important conference, which was held one evening early in 1787, at the log cabin home of Sevier on the Nolichucky.

After supper James, to his joy, was invited to sit by the fireside, and to listen to what he knew would be an important conversation.

"You see, James, you are your father's right-hand man, and you should understand the things that make me anxious.

"I have asked you men here to-night that we might talk of some of the things that trouble me," was Sevier's method of beginning the conversation with his friends.

"Spain is trying to make us dissatisfied with our country," he continued. "She has closed the Mississippi River to our trade. This means that there is no market for the crops we grow. At the same time she

is encouraging the Indians to attack us. All this is done, not because Spain pities us, but because Spain does not like the United States. Congress is ready to agree that the Mississippi shall be closed to us by Spain for twenty years. And Spain tells us that if we will set up a government independent of the United States, she will help us to win our independence, will call off the Indians, who are threatening us, and will give us full use of the Mississippi."

"Could you be sure of any help if you were to do as Spain asks?" Judge Campbell inquired.

"Yes, the Governor of Georgia says he would stand by us," Sevier replied. "He says he hopes we will never return to North Carolina."

"And I feel sure you would have at least twenty thousand soldiers at your back if you should decide to set up a government that would please the King of Spain." Landon Carter added his word of encouragement and temptation. "I say nothing of the Indians. Twenty thousand of them would be on your side. They would ask nothing better than to fight with Nolichucky Jack, whom they respect so much, instead of having Nolichucky Jack whom they fear, opposed to them."

"Sevier, you might easily become the great man of the whole western country," Judge Campbell urged. "If you say the word, you can be our leader. I do not think there would be much opposition to our going

out of the United States, either. Think how that would solve all our difficulties!"

"I believe you are right, Judge," Carter nodded his head decisively. "Just yesterday I had word of the message sent by Thomas Jefferson to Madison:

"'I never had any interest westward of the Alleghany, and never will have any. I will venture to say that the act which abandons the navigation of the Mississippi, is an act of separation between the Eastern and Western country. If they declare themselves a separate people, we are incapable of a single effort to retain them.'"

"How about it, Jack? Are we to have a Franklin Republic of the West? If you say the word, this can be done, almost as easy as speaking." Judge Campbell's eyes glistened, and his hands were trembling.

Sevier did not reply at once. He sat in deep thought. Minutes passed before he raised his head.

Then his eyes flashed and his voice trembled as he spoke what was in his mind.

"No, friends; it cannot be. I thank you for your words of confidence. But I cannot approve any act that would look to the breaking of the Union for which we fought at King's Mountain. More, I cannot lift a hand against North Carolina."

"But what about the Indians?" Campbell and Carter asked at the same moment.

"I must lead against them. I know what you are thinking. To do so would enable North Carolina to charge me with high treason. But I cannot help that. The people of Franklin have a right to all I can do to protect them. Every ounce of my strength, every drop of my blood, belongs to them, for defence. But not for one moment will I consent to fight for power by shedding the blood of my neighbors and my countrymen."

As he spoke Sevier rose to his feet. So did Campbell and Carter. Both men reached for the hand of their loyal leader. James could not grasp a hand, but his face showed his pride in his father who had spoken with such heroism.

"There is nothing more to say, Sevier," Campbell said.

"Except that we are more proud of you than ever!" Carter added.

Then the guests took their departure, and father and son were alone.

"Father, I'm glad my name is Sevier!" James said, with emotion.

"Son, I can face anything with you, your mother and your brother, to stand by me. And I will need your help. For stormy days are upon us."

Sevier was right. The North Carolina Assembly declared that Sevier held no office, and that the State

of Franklin did not exist. One result of this action was the encouragement of those who opposed the courts of Franklin. They held court in the name of North Carolina. One of these opposing men, whose name was Tipton, held a court for Washington County, at a log house ten miles from Jonesboro, where the official court had been held. Taking with him fifty armed men, Tipton went to Jonesboro, seized the records of the court in the face of all the officials, and took them to his court.

The clerk of the Jonesboro court was twenty-three-year-old James Sevier. That night he took a force of men to Tipton's court and recovered the records. Tipton came back the next night and carried away the papers a second time. But James Sevier was not discouraged; once more he recovered the documents. This time he hid them in a cave, and Tipton was unable to find them.

"This sort of thing must stop!" Sevier said to his old friend, Evan Shelby, who was a representative of North Carolina. Therefore the two men made an agreement, which promised peace. Part of the agreement was that the people must be free to recognize the authority, as they wished, of North Carolina or of the State of Franklin, and that taxes could be paid to either State.

"We will do as Nolichucky Jack wants in most

things," his old neighbor said. "But there is one thing we must do in the old way. We will not go against the Indians under North Carolina leaders. We want our own Jack."

They meant what they said. When Evan Shelby, for North Carolina, made call for volunteers to go with him against the Indians, only about five hundred said they would follow him, though four thousand might have done so. Yet, when Sevier sent word that the Creeks were making a raid in Georgia, having killed already twenty-five families, and that he called for those who would follow him in case of need, three thousand men said they were ready. And they knew that they would have to travel five hundred miles over a difficult forest-clad country, and that they would have to find their own equipment.

Soon came another call from the North. Creeks and Chickasaws were about to go against Nashville, determined to burn the settlement. Robertson appealed to North Carolina for aid. But North Carolina said that nothing could be done. So Robertson asked help of Sevier.

"I need six hundred men for service against the Indians!" was the message that Sevier sent throughout the country.

Now, although Sevier was without any authority that could be recognized, his word was law. The troops

he needed came to his aid, and he was able to give the assistance Robertson asked.

When word was carried to the invading Indians that these men came from Sevier, they went back home, deciding that it was of no use to continue the war until they had a much larger force.

"For Nolichucky Jack is sending troops, and he will put in the field thousands more, if he needs to do so," they said.

The Governor of Georgia was the next man to ask the assistance of the soldier who had been outlawed by North Carolina. Sevier was asked to supply fifteen hundred men to aid three thousand men from Georgia. When the message reached Sevier, on November 28, 1787, six hundred of his men were still on duty in the Cumberland Country, in response to Robertson's call. But Sevier did not hesitate; he asked fifteen hundred men to join him for the Georgia expedition. And within four days the entire quota was with him, ready for the long march into Georgia with the man whom North Carolina, in an act which pardoned all other offenders in the State of Franklin, had forbidden to hold any office in that State.

The enmity of North Carolina to Sevier influenced different men in interesting ways. When it was rumored, incorrectly, that an agent of North Carolina was about to arrest the hero, two hundred men rushed

to rescue him. Then the Cherokees felt encouraged by the news to go against the settlers of the French Broad and the Holston.

“Nolichucky Jack can do nothing against us now!” their chiefs said.

Of course they were mistaken, although he knew that action against the Indians would be counted treason by North Carolina. When on his way to the troubled region, where twelve thousand Indians were threatening three thousand settlers, he was told that North Carolina had said that any officer or man who served under him would be outlawed. At the time he had one hundred and fifty men with him. At once he sent them out as messengers to bring in as many as possible of his old officers and men.

In March, 1788, hundreds of men gathered to do his bidding. The meeting was held at Greeneville, the second Capital of the State of Franklin. There they were told of the need of their services, and of the danger which threatened them if they should serve.

At once the streets of the little town, and even the forests beyond, rang with the shout:

“We will follow Nolichucky Jack!”

Sevier looked at the scores of frontiersmen, each of them sitting on the horse which he was eager to ride at the bidding of the country's hero.

“Thank you, men; from my heart I thank you!”

Finally Sevier found voice to say, though he spoke with great emotion. "We have had wonderful times together. But now I feel you ought to serve under North Carolina, not under me; we must not do anything to add to the difficulty of those who have authority over us. With the one hundred and fifty men who came with me from the Nolichucky, I shall go to the troubled country. We can drive back the Cherokees. If the Creeks from Georgia come against us, Georgia will call for troops. As I am an officer commissioned by that State, I shall send for you. Then you could serve under me without danger of being accused of treason."

Yet there were those who misrepresented Sevier. A message was sent to the Governor of North Carolina, telling of the meeting of Sevier with his old comrades, and hinting that Sevier, while pretending to go against the Indians, was really intending to attack the citizens of North Carolina.

Only three days after this mischievous message had been sent to the Governor of North Carolina, Sevier wrote to the man who had charged him with double dealing:

"I have been faithful, and my own breast acquits myself that I have acted no part but what has been consistent with honor and justice, tempered with clemency and mercy."

During the following week Sevier wrote again to the same man:

“I am ready to suspend all kinds of hostilities and prosecutions on our part and bury in total oblivion all past contentions.”

Sevier rode on to the French Broad country, taking with him his one hundred and fifty men.

But, try as he would to keep them from joining him, at least one hundred men forced themselves into his company.

What a wonderful reception was given them when they came among the endangered settlers! The event made such an impression on a small boy that he wrote, when he was an old man:

“He was a great man, was 'Chucky Jack. I was a boy of five years when he came across the French Broad to fight the Indians. We all went out to greet him. He shook hands with Dad, and gave him some orders, for Dad had fit under him; then he bent over his saddle and kissed mother, and asked Dad to lift me up that he might kiss me, too. Dad put me up in the saddle, and 'Chucky Jack took me in his arms, patted me on the head, and said that I should grow up to be as brave a man as my father. Ah! sir; I shall never forget that!”

“Nolichucky Jack, first, last, and all the time!” was the slogan of the people of the mountain country. Their feeling toward him was well represented in a poem which told of one who spoke, years later, of those days:

NOLICHUCKY JACK

- “Dad would take down his Deckard,
And tell the stirring tale,
How 'Chucky Jack, the hero,
Led on the Indian trail;
- “How silently we followed
When he did lead the way,
Till the savage camp was sighted
At the dawning of the day.
- “Then 'Chucky Jack dismounted,
And gave the Indian yell.
And down we swooped upon 'em
Like devils out of hell.
- “The bullets they did rattle,
About our ranks like hail;
It was the sort of battle
At which the braves might quail;
- “But through it all our leader,
A-waving of his blade,
Rode, 'mid the fire and slaughter
As cool as on parade;
- “Though many a savage marksman
All through the bloody strife,
Had poised his deadly rifle
For the taking of his life:
- “But never yet was moulded
The bullet for his breast,
For there's a better fate awaiting
Our hero of the West.”

CHAPTER XVIII

NOLICHUCKY JACK TO THE RESCUE

“THE Cherokees have made their plans to take all their men of war to the lower French Broad settlements. They say they will not be content till they have driven every settler to the north of what they say is their hunting ground. This they intend to do by making attacks by small parties on every station at the same time. In this way they can be sure that one settlement will not give aid to another. This the word as it has come to me. Beware!”

Thus Isaac Thomas aroused to their danger the men of the scattered settlements, and stirred up the ever watchful Jack Sevier to hasten to their aid.

Steps to meet the impending danger were taken promptly.

“You must abandon the Walker and Arden settlements, as well as two or three more which I shall name,” the trusted leader said to the endangered men. “Those who live there must divide themselves among the stronger settlements, so that the defenders there will be increased in number. Then I will take the four hundred men who are with me down below the settlements, to meet the Cherokees before they come to you. Per-

haps it will be possible for us to go still farther down, into the country of the Cherokees. We have learned by experience that they are apt to give up their plans against the whites if they have reason to think that their own villages are in danger."

Delay by the Cherokees in beginning their raids gave Sevier the time he needed to organize the men for defense. Most of them were to be with him, so he arranged that boys as young as fifteen, with their mothers and sisters, should stand behind the guns in the forts prepared to meet the assaults of the Indians.

The weeks when no enemy appeared were not spent in idleness; every available helper was useful in moulding bullets and preparing ammunition for defense.

The Cherokees delayed so long that some people thought they had been misled by a false alarm. But they learned their mistake when, in May, 1788, a pioneer named Kirk, who lived on Little River, was attacked by the savages. He had chosen to remain in his exposed house with his mother, his wife, and nine of his children.

"There is no danger for us," he had said. "Even if the Cherokees come, they will pass us by, for they are our friends. Often they have been in our house. I am not afraid."

Yet one morning, during the absence of the father, fifty fiendish redskins attacked the log house, and put to death all of those who were at home.

When Kirk returned and saw the awful results of the Indians' visit, his first thought was of Nolichucky Jack. Within a few hours he was at Hunter's Station, where Sevier was waiting for news. Among the four hundred men at his side who were ready to do his bidding was the oldest son of Kirk. The boy's grief as he learned of the disaster made the men eager to go on a raid of vengeance.

"Not yet!" Sevier said, as he held them back. "Possibly we shall hear of other raids. It may be that those fifty Indians were but a small part of an invading force. We must learn the truth."

But Sevier's spies soon reported to him that there was no evidence of other Indians. They also told the leader that it would be easy to follow the trail of the fifty murderers, for they had returned south by way of the Little Tennessee.

"Now we're off, men!" Sevier said to his four hundred stalwarts. "Let us lose no time."

How well they responded to his plea is evident from the fact that on the first day Sevier's force covered full fifty miles of trail through the rough forest country. Twenty miles over good country would be a fine day's travel for an army. But on this occasion the men could not be held back. Kirk's son was near the front, and if any were tempted to lag a little, the sight of his set, determined face put new life into them.

The rapid progress of the company enabled them

to take completely by surprise their quarry, who had stopped for the night in a village on the Hiwassee River. The sight of vengeful Nolichucky Jack and his followers filled all the Indians with dismay; they sought safety in flight, but many of them were killed before they could leave the town. Those who remained alive were made prisoners in time to enable them to see the destruction of their houses by fire.

“This is not enough to teach them a lesson!” Sevier said. “We must go on to the Tellico where Old Tassell and John Watts live, as well as twelve hundred fighting men of the Ottari Cherokees. All who will follow me, step forward!”

Of course all stepped forward. Then, with a quiet smile, Sevier led them on until they came to the village he sought. Most of the Indians were absent,¹ probably on a war expedition. The villages were destroyed. Then Sevier said he would go north toward the settlements to see if he were not needed there.

“Major Hubbard, do you stay here with two hundred men to carry on the raiding we have begun,” was Sevier’s commission, as he rode away.

But no sooner was the honorable leader gone than Major Hubbard was guilty of an act that would have been impossible if Sevier had remained in command. He sent word to Abraham of Chilhowee, an Indian known to be friendly to the whites.

Now Abraham thought he could do as he was asked with safety, for was not Sevier there? And how could there be treachery with Sevier around?

So he crossed the river with several other chiefs, and followed Major Hubbard into a log cabin. This was surrounded by a guard of Hubbard's men, while young Kirk had entered with Hubbard. The unsuspecting Abraham was murdered, and those who were with him, unarmed, made no resistance when they, too, were attacked. Among those killed was Old Tassel, or Rayetayeh, as he was called by his people, the head chieftain of the Cherokees.

When Sevier, on his return the next day, learned of the occurrence, he was filled with indignation. But he was powerless to punish anybody, since the men who went with Hubbard were volunteers. Sevier himself was a volunteer, and the long-suffering frontiersmen agreed that the act of treachery was justified.

But the deed brought its own punishment. For the Cherokees were stirred to such indignation that, for the time, they forgot their fear of Nolichucky Jack and his men. In a frenzy, they made up their minds to avenge the chiefs' death by wiping out the settlers.

"They won't lack for aid, either," Sevier said to Major Hubbard, who, while accepting the responsibility for his awful deed, still insisted that this was justified. "The Creeks are ready to stand with the

Cherokees. And Spain will give them all the arms they need, for we have angered the Spanish commander by our failure to listen to their proposals that we take sides with them against our country."

Sevier knew that he had a hard campaign ahead of him, but he did not realize that it would be necessary for him to spend five months in the field, on guard continually against attack, ever carrying the fight into the heart of the enemy's country, or rushing back to defend the settlers at home, and content to do this with the four hundred men who were with him. As an outlaw he refused to compromise others by asking them to come to his aid, though he knew he had but to speak, and they would respond with alacrity.

"Look out!" word was sent to the fortresses where the settlers were on guard. "The Cherokees may come at any minute! They are enraged as they have not been in recent years, and they will be more ruthless than you have ever known Indians to be."

As Sevier thought would be the case, the savages swooped down on the settlements, attacking first one, then another, and sometimes a number at once. Nolichucky Jack's ingenuity was put to a great test, but he managed somehow to be on hand, either in person or through a subordinate, when danger threatened, or to appear there in season to drive off the attackers. Everywhere he was victorious. The fear and admiration of

the Indians for him increased; they felt that they were arrayed against a demon, not a man.

Once Sevier was twenty-five miles away when the Houston Station was attacked by a large body of Cherokees. Defenders were scarce, but one was sent to find Sevier, while the others prepared to resist to the last. There were forty people within the enclosure, but only ten of them were able to use the rifle. The conflict became so hot that the defenders began to feel that they could not survive until Sevier came to their assistance. But how heroic they were!

Once, during the conflict, an Indian ball entered between the logs and fell at the feet of a brave woman. Coolly she picked it up, and handed it to one of the riflemen. "Send it back where it came from!" was her splendid message.

Defenders like that could not be resisted long, and after an hour the Indians withdrew, perhaps to meditate strategy, for use when force had failed.

As they fell back, Sevier, with one hundred men met them.

"There they are! At them, boys!" Sevier shouted. Then he gave his bloodcurdling yell. In this the men joined. The savages, listening to the terrifying sound, scattered through the forest.

When the victorious leader learned that the savages, before attacking the Houston Station, had butchered

sixteen of twenty-one settlers whom they had surprised when on a scouting expedition, he called for volunteers to follow him into the Indian country.

“Who'll go with me to fight them on their own ground, and teach them a lesson that they cannot forget?”

One hundred men went with him, until they came to Chilhowee, where they met a large force of Indians. With them he fought until thirteen of them were lying dead on the ground.

“More Indians have appeared here!” the message came from the settlements. So Sevier and his force went back to the fortresses to the north. There for weeks Sevier and his men confronted the raiding parties of John Watts, Double Head, and the Bloody Fellow, until the chiefs decided that they could do nothing against such a sleepless whirlwind as Nolichucky Jack. Then they retired to their own towns, but not until many of their followers had been killed.

Once more the tireless leader rushed southward. The Indians must not be allowed to rest. Though he knew that there were three thousand warriors where he was going, he was content to go against them with a hundred and forty men. After crossing the high and precipitous Unaka Mountains, he fell on village after village, and left a mass of smoking ruins. The Indians refused to defend their homes. As Sevier intended,

they were filled with terror of him, and they fled when he appeared.

But John Watts was not too frightened to plan revenge. With eight hundred warriors he went into the mountains, determined to fall on Sevier and his men when they were on their homeward way. Cunningly he placed two hundred men on each side of a mountain river, hemmed in between precipices, through which Sevier must pass. Two hundred more warriors were placed at the mouth of the pass, while one hundred men were sent out as a decoy to draw Sevier into the trap.

But Sevier was not to be deceived so easily. With a cunning that was almost uncanny, he read the purpose of Watts. Then he made it useless by leading his men up, up, up over the mountain, through forests that seemed impenetrable, along precipices that fell away to chasms of unknown depth.

Watts, discovering the escape of his prey, followed him up the mountain and down the other side. But when Sevier drew his men up in battle array, Watts was afraid to meet him, though he had five times as many men. He retreated, and Sevier returned to the settlements.

One more effort was made by the Cherokees. In force they descended on the pioneers, and for three months Sevier faced them, meeting guile with greater

guile, and showing his superiority at every turn. Of one of his conflicts during this period, a sample of many, a paper published at Raleigh, North Carolina, gave an admiring account.

“On the 21st of September a large body of the enemy, not less than two hundred, attacked Sherrill’s Station late in the evening. Sevier that day, with forty horsemen, was out ranging, and came on the Indian trail. He immediately advanced after them, and arrived at the fort where the Indians were carrying on a furious attack. He drew up his troops in close order, made known his intention to relieve the garrison or fall in the attempt, and asked who was willing to follow him. All gave consent. At a signal, a charge was made on the enemy as they were busily employed in setting fire to a farm and other outbuildings. The Indians gave way and immediately retired, and the gallant little band of horsemen reached the fort. This exploit was performed under cover of the night, and conformably to the Governor of Franklin’s usual good fortune, not a man of his party was hurt.”

At length, after another invasion of the Indians’ country by Sevier, John Watts threw up his hands. To his warriors he made a despairing address, which has been reported as follows:

“The wind and the fire fight for the great eagle of the palefaces. We can no longer contend with him.

From his high station in the clouds he sees our exposed places ; and when he swoops down, his hot breath blasts our cornfields and consumes our wigwams. His flight is like the wind, his blow like the thunderbolt. Who can stand before him? He claims the French Broad lands. He will be our friend if we let his people plant their corn in peace. He speaks well. Let it be so ; it is the voice of the Great Spirit."

CHAPTER XIX

THE ARREST AND ESCAPE OF NOLICHUCKY JACK

WHILE Sevier was giving his time, property and skill to protecting the lower settlements from the Cherokees, enemies were trying hard to see that he was punished for the very things that made him so useful to his friends and neighbors.

One charge against him was that he had led the people in rebellion against North Carolina. The answer to this charge was that he had helped them to secure a government when they were neglected by those who claimed their allegiance.

Another charge was that he led armed men when he had no authority from North Carolina to do so. But he had only gone to the protection of his needy neighbors because there was no one else to help them in their struggle with the savages. He had no thought of using the troops against North Carolina, but men who were jealous of him insisted that he could not be trusted not to use the armed men against that State.

“He is a traitor, a rebel, a dangerous man, and he must be arrested!” the enemies said to the Governor of North Carolina.

So, in July, 1788, Governor Johnston sent word to

Judge Campbell of the Supreme Court of Washington County at Jonesboro, directing him to issue a warrant for the arrest of John Sevier, on the charge of high treason, "in levying troops to oppose the laws and government of the State."

But Judge Campbell, knowing that the charges were false, refused to issue the warrant. When he had written to the Governor his reason, the Governor ordered another judge to see that Sevier was arrested.

This was just at the time when the successful Indian fighter was returning home from his absence of months of warfare in the interest of the people of the lower settlements with a record of many victories over the Cherokees which had saved the lives and property of hundreds of men who were extending civilization beyond the mountains.

Eagerly the returning hero sought the hospitable log cabin on the Nolichucky where his wife had been waiting for him during the months of his absence. He stayed at home long enough to learn how successful she had been in caring for the plantation.

"I must leave you again, Kate," he said to his wife, after his brief visit. "But I am going only to Jonesboro, and I shall return in a few days."

While he knew that he was in danger always, he had no thought that his enemies were lying in wait for

him, and that the absence was to be much longer than he planned.

He might have been arrested at Jonesboro, since the warrant had been issued, and his enemies were there waiting for him. But they did not act. Probably they were afraid to lay hands on him in the midst of his friends, for fear that these would rise in his defense, and prevent the arrest.

The opportunity sought came when he left Jonesboro one day near nightfall.

"He will spend the night not far away, probably at the home of Colonel Charles Robertson," said Colonel Tipton to Colonel Love. "We can take him there without trouble."

Accordingly the two colonels, with ten armed men, rode late that night to Robertson's. Search there was in vain.

They went five miles farther, to the home of Mrs. Brown, whose husband had served loyally under Sevier. Though they reached the place before sunrise, Mrs. Brown was already up. When she saw the armed men, she guessed their errand.

"They shall not take Nolichucky Jack here!" she said, with determination.

When Colonel Tipton approached, he found Mrs. Brown sitting in the front door, prepared to bar all entrance into the house.

The demand that she allow the officers of the law to seek Sevier, and the defiant reply of Mrs. Brown, aroused the man who was wanted. At once he guessed what was happening, and in a few moments he appeared within the passage which led to the front door.

"Colonel Love," he called, "I surrender to you."

Then Colonel Tipton, the enemy who had secured the warrant for Sevier's arrest, called out to him:

"Let me lay hands on you, you traitor! We'll hang you from the nearest tree! Or why should I wait? This will take care of you!"

As he spoke, he was lifting his pistol to shoot the defenceless man. But Colonel Love interfered, and succeeded in calming the angry Tipton.

"Then get your horse, and we'll take you to Jonesboro!" Tipton ordered.

At Jonesboro, iron handcuffs were fastened about the wrists of the prisoner, and he was told that he was to be taken to Morgantown, North Carolina.

"Don't let them take me over the mountains, Colonel Love!" Sevier urged Tipton's associate, an old friend.

"I wonder if that wouldn't be best, Sevier," was the response. "If you are kept in prison in Jonesboro, Tipton will be afraid of a rescue by your friends, and will place a strong guard about the jail. Then when your loyal supporters come to release you, there will

be bloodshed. By going to North Carolina, you can prevent this. I know you would rather save life than destroy it."

Part of the journey to North Carolina was made in the keeping of Colonel Love, who did all he could to protect and help the prisoner. Later he left Sevier in the charge of a deputy sheriff, who took him the remainder of the way.

That night, when the little party was encamped on Iron Mountain, a friendly guard told Sevier that the other guard had received instructions to shoot him before the mountains were left behind.

Next morning, then, when Sevier saw a chance to escape, he dashed into the forest. His handcuffs interfered with his horsemanship, but, even so, he would have managed to get safely away had not a fallen tree interfered with his progress. The guard against whom he had been warned overtook him, and fired his pistol at him. Fortunately the bullet did not touch him, though it whistled close to his face.

Before the man could reload, the deputy sheriff came up.

"I don't blame you for trying to escape, Sevier," he said. "I've heard something of the dangers you are trying to avoid. But I give you my word that, if you go with me quietly, there will be no further attempts on your life."

The remainder of the journey was without event. When the party reached the jail at Morgantown, the sheriff received Sevier with surprise and sorrow.

“Jack Sevier!” he greeted him. “I haven’t seen you since I fought with you at King’s Mountain! And now they bring you to me a prisoner. I won’t lock you up!”

“Yes, you will, old comrade!” came the reply. “You will do your duty, and no one will praise you more than your old commander.”

“Then I’ll do as you say; but no one can make me keep those irons on you!”

Sevier smiled his thanks as the loyal associate of other days removed the handcuffs and threw them contemptuously from him.

“To think that they should bind Jack Sevier so!” he muttered angrily.

While the journey to Morgantown had been made, the astonishing news of Sevier’s arrest—or his kidnapping, as his friends called it—became known not only in Jonesboro, but throughout the country.

“I can’t believe it!” Landon Carter said, when he was informed. “They might talk of arresting that man for treason. But how could they do it? How is it possible to make the charge?”

Yet soon the people were convinced, not only that the charge had been made, but that the arrest had fol-

lowed, and that their idol, Nolichucky Jack, had been taken in irons over the mountains.

The thoughts of outraged friends of Sevier found expression in an indignant statement made by one of them:

“Had the destroying angel passed through the land, and destroyed the first-born in every dwelling, the feelings of the hardy frontiersmen would not have been more aroused. Had the chiefs and warriors of the whole Cherokee nation fallen upon and butchered the defenseless settlers, the spirit of retaliation and revenge would not have been more strongly awakened in their bosoms. They had supped with him, fought under him, with him shared the dangers and privations of a frontier life, and they were not the spirits to remain inactive when their friend was in danger.”

Speedily hundreds of aroused men gathered at Jonesboro. All sorts of suggestions were made. Many of the leaders wished to guide an armed force to North Carolina, to fight for their old commander, and take revenge for the affront of his arrest.

Wiser counsels prevailed. “Jack would not want bloodshed,” Judge Campbell said. “You know how he has refused to lift his hand against North Carolina. All his efforts have been to preserve the peace with the old State, while opposing the Indians on our behalf.”

The plan finally adopted was to send a few picked

men to Morgantown. Included in the party were Sevier's sons Joseph and James. Leading their father's favorite riding horse, they toiled over the mountains.

The jailer at Morgantown had been kind to his prisoner. He did not keep him confined closely. Once he even let him go on a visit to a relative near by, requiring only his promise to return on the day appointed for his trial.

The arrival of the rescuing party was well timed. They appeared in Morgantown on the day of the trial. Sevier's horse was led to the door of the log courthouse. Then one of Sevier's friends walked into the courtroom; after catching Sevier's eye, and motioning toward the waiting horse, he attracted attention to himself, thus enabling Sevier to dart from the room, mount his horse, and dash away into the forest.

That night the little party camped at Pineland Spring, on the farm of one of Sevier's friends. Vigilant guard was kept, for pursuit was feared.

Next day the company rode on, and in due time came triumphantly to the Sevier home on the Nolichucky.

There his friends gathered from far and near, to welcome him. What a celebration there was! And how wonderfully the log-cabin home justified its reputation for hospitality!

A feature of the celebration was a speech by Judge Campbell. This he concluded by saying:

“The best thing we can do to show North Carolina what we think of Nolichucky Jack is to make him our State Senator.”

“Nolichucky Jack for the Senate!” shouted an enthusiast,

The cry was repeated by ten, one hundred, a thousand. And in later weeks it was echoed throughout the region from which votes were to come.

On election day, John Sevier, who was under North Carolina's indictment for treason, was chosen Senator to represent his district in the North Carolina Senate!

When the election was announced in the Senate, the motion was made that the charge of treason be withdrawn. Some opposed the plea, until a member pointed out the folly of making such an accusation against the man who had done more than any one else to protect the frontier, and had refused to lift his hand against North Carolina.

Then the measure passed, and Nolichucky Jack was welcomed to the legislature of the State which had been used by treacherous foes to seek his undoing.

He had won the recognition he deserved in the face of the opposition of those whose only reason for opposition to him was jealousy of the man who was the idol of thousands of his fellow citizens.

CHAPTER XX

“THE CHEROKEES ARE COMING!”

“AND is it you, Isaac Thomas? Light and come in!” called hospitable Jack Sevier from the door of his cabin on the Nolichucky one afternoon late in the year 1788, when he saw the old trader rein before the gate.

“I had all kinds of things to ask you,” Sevier said, when greetings had been exchanged, and the two men were seated before the great fireplace. “But I can see from your face that something is troubling you. Let’s hear it, old friend!”

“It’s the old story, Sevier,” was the trader’s reply. “If you were any other man I would not have the face to come and ask for help. But you are Nolichucky Jack, and we all know how you like to help people who are in trouble.”

“If I didn’t want to do all I could to help you and your friends, I would be a poor stick!” Sevier reassured him. “So out with it.”

“Here it is, then. When the State of Franklin was here, and you were Governor, we who live down in the lower settlements on the French Broad knew that you were looking out for us. Now the State of Franklin is gone, and we are left with no one to do a thing for us. North Carolina won’t do it, for we are on lands they say we ought not to have. You, on the upper

settlements, are in another position, for North Carolina wants you.

"And our needs are greater than ever, for the renegades and outlaws are all about us. They are coming there because we live in a sort of No Man's Land. We never know when they will attack us. Neither life nor property is safe. Jack, can you help us?"

"I wish I could, Isaac." Sevier's regret showed in his voice and in the touch of his hand on the shoulder of Thomas, who had slumped down in his chair after telling his troubles.

"No, I can't help you myself, for I am now a brigadier general in the service of North Carolina. But I can do something better than go with my men to you, and I can show you what to do for yourselves, and I'll do this, until you are in a position that will make you the envy of all the other settlements."

"I don't see how that can be, if you are not able to come to our assistance yourself," Thomas objected.

"You don't? Well, then, what would you say to mapping out with me a plan for defense throughout the settlements? And what would you think of organizing a little State of Franklin? You can use the name, for our State is dead. You need a government to deal with the cut-throats who threaten your peace, and to direct your efforts for defence in case the Cherokees and Creeks just below you go on the war-path."

The enthusiasm of Sevier was communicated to

Thomas, in spite of his doubts and fears. Within a short time the result was the organization of the little State of Franklin, by a group of determined men who met at the cabin of Thomas in a settlement to which the name Sevier was given.

That government acted for nearly six years, or until the United States took over the region, in 1794, and made it into the county of Sevier.

“Here are the Articles of Association which Sevier has helped us prepare,” Thomas said to his guests. “Let’s sign them, and be ready for the serious work before us.”

It was arranged that the governor of the new State should receive for his services one thousand deer skins per year. Other officers were to be rewarded as follows:

“His honor, the chief justice, five hundred deer skins; secretary to his excellency the governor, five hundred racoon skins; the treasurer of the State, four hundred and fifty otter skins; each county clerk, three hundred beaver skins; chief of the house of commons, two hundred beaver skins; member of the assembly, three beaver skins; justices for signing a warrant, one muskrat skin; to the constable for serving a warrant, one mink skin.”

The reason given in the act of assembly for paying these odd salaries was as follows:

“Whereas the collection of taxes in specie, for the

want of a circulating medium, has become very oppressive to the good people of this Commonwealth. . .”

The new State was young when the threats of the Indians made necessary an expedition which, in spite of Sevier's feeling that he could not take the field himself, was commanded by him. On January 12, 1789, he sent to “the privy council of the new State of Franklin,” the following report:

“It is with the utmost pleasure I inform your honors, that the arms of Franklin gained a complete victory over the combined forces of the Creeks and Cherokees on the 10th inst. Since my last, I received information that the enemy were collecting in a considerable body near Flint Creek, with an intention to attack me. I immediately marched my corps towards the spot, and arrived after enduring much hardship, by reason of the immense quantities of snow and piercing cold. We soon discovered the situation of their encampment by the smoke of their fires, which we found extended along the foot of the Appalachian Mountain. I called a council of war of all the officers, in which it was agreed to attack the enemy without loss of time; and in order to surround them, I ordered General McCarter, with the bloody rangers and the tomahawkmen, to take possession of the mountain, the only pass I knew that the Indians could retreat by, while I, with the rest of the corps, formed a line, nearly extending from the right to the left of their wings.

“Our artillery soon roused the Indians from their huts, and, finding themselves pretty much surrounded on all sides, they only tried to save themselves by flight, from which they were prevented by our riflemen posted behind the trees. Their case being desperate, they made some resistance, and killed the people who were serving our artillery.

“Our ammunition being much damaged by the snow on the march, and the enemy’s in good order, I found it necessary to abandon that mode of attack, and trust the event to the sword and the tomahawk. Col. Loid, with 100 horsemen, charged the Indians with sword in hand, and the rest of the corps followed with their tomahawks. Death presented itself on all sides in shocking scenes, and in less than half an hour the enemy ceased making resistance, and left me in possession of the bloody field.

“The loss of the enemy is very considerable; we have buried 145 of their dead, and by the blood we have traced for miles all over the wood it is supposed the greater part of them retreated with wounds. Our loss consists of five dead, and sixteen wounded.”

The next great contest with the Creeks and Cherokees did not come until 1793, after a period when the Indians showed that they were about to disregard their treaty obligations.

“I wish I could go down into the country and give them a lesson,” Sevier said to one of his associates.

"But the United States has forbidden me to go to the Indians' towns; all I can do is to be ready to resist them if they come."

Accordingly the great Indian fighter moved from the Nolichucky to a new log cabin below the infant town of Knoxville and built a series of blockhouses to protect the frontier.

Then word came to him, on September 25, 1793, that the Cherokees, knowing that Sevier was forbidden to invade their territory, and that there was at Knoxville a tempting supply of arms and ammunition, made what they thought were secret preparations for a raid.

"Nolichucky Jack is far away from Knoxville, at one of his forts, and we can seize the arms before he knows we are coming," said the Bloody Fellow to John Watts, at the council before the raid.

But somehow the news became known in time for a messenger to be rushed to Knoxville. His steaming horse was reined in sharply before the blockhouse.

"The Cherokees are coming!" the man shouted. "There are a thousand of the savages, and they are only ten miles away."

Forty men rushed to the fort, prepared to defend it and the ammunition with their lives.

Forty against a thousand! But the party had brave hearts, and they resolved to give a good account of themselves.

Hours passed. Then another horseman dashed up.

“They are at Cavet’s, only eight miles away. There are fifteen hundred of them!”

“Why should we wait for them here?” asked James White. “I propose that we go out to-night to that wooded range, a mile from the blockhouse. Then, in ambush, we can wait for the foe. When we fire on them unexpectedly, we may send them away in a panic.”

The plan was adopted. The ridge sheltered forty desperate men. But they waited in vain. The Indians did not come.

And this was the reason. Nolichucky Jack, twenty miles away, learning of the descent of the Cherokees, had set out in haste to intercept them. Scouts of the Indians warned them of his approach.

“Nolichucky Jack is upon us! There is no escaping that man!” John Watts called, despairingly, to those who were close to him when the scouts had made known their discovery.

In a moment the Cherokees turned and began a hurried retreat to their own territory. And after them came Jack Sevier, with six hundred men. They had been forbidden to go into the Indian country, but surely they could not be blamed for pursuing, even into their own country, the savages who had visited the settlements.

The frightened savages retreated in disorder, but the six hundred men with Sevier followed them with incredible speed. They crossed the border. They went

down among the Indian towns. They slew scores of Creeks and Cherokees. They burned the villages. They went far down into Georgia, ever driving the Indians before them.

Once the Indians tried to keep them from crossing a river. There was a fight, where the whites were outnumbered four to one. Yet Sevier's forces won quickly. Ammunition was captured, and three hundred cattle were killed. Then the food supplies of the enemy were cut off.

The official report of another action in the expedition as sent to the Governor of Virginia, told how :

“ The enemy abandoned their town on the approach of our Troops, and took refuge in the mountains, declining to give battle to the main body, but a small company of men sent to destroy a small town was attacked by a party of Indians, supposed to be about 200.

“ The action was won in about fifteen minutes, on our showing skill and courage in the Indian's mode of warfare. The enemy fled precipitately, leaving several of their party dead on the place of action. Our party had three killed and five wounded.”

Thus ended the famous campaign of Etowah. The costly lesson was so well learned that the Indians were unwilling, while Sevier lived, to invade the country of which he was guardian.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRIUMPHS OF GOVERNOR SEVIER

“ I HAVE the honor to inform you that you have been elected the first Governor of Tennessee, by unanimous vote of the people! ”

General James Robertson, who had won fame throughout the new country by his services to the people, made the announcement to his friend and associate in January, 1796, twenty-four years after the visit paid by Sevier to Robertson's home on the Watauga which changed the course of the life of the young trader from Virginia.

“ It hardly seems possible that less than three years have passed since the Southwest Territory was organized, and that Tennessee has so soon gained the population that entitles her to statehood, ” Sevier said, after the two men had exchanged greetings.

When the new Governor went to Knoxville, where the Legislature sat, he began to build a house. But he was unable to finish this. His large savings from his trading post in Virginia had been exhausted by his generous provision for the expenses of troops during the Indian warfare of years. His salary was small. In fact, the infant State was impoverished. It had but \$3,145.64 in the treasury soon after Sevier became Governor.

A less pretentious house was chosen, and there Sevier lived simply during his term of office.

But this manner of life in the hospitable home to which friends—and everybody was Sevier's friend—were always welcome, made him more popular than ever. "We know why he is so poor!" Isaac Thomas said one day. "If he had not spent his money to save the country for us, he would be the richest man in Tennessee! He has something far better than riches, though; he is the best-loved man in the State. At the same time the people revere him for his upright character, and the Indians honor him while they fear him."

The extent of Nolichucky Jack's power over the Indians became apparent once more soon after his reelection for a second term in 1798. There had been trouble between the Indians and the settlers because the white men insisted on taking possession of lands of the red men which had not been handed over to the United States by treaty. Congress, therefore, arranged for a treaty with the Indians, that the land might be purchased from them.

Governor Sevier made all arrangements for the meeting, in accordance with the plan of the United States. He even asked General Robertson, James Stuart, and Lachlan McIntosh to attend and help in the negotiations.

But, to the dismay of the commission, the Indians refused absolutely to sell their lands. The Bloody

Fellow, the spokesman for the Indians, said that the lands could not be opened for settlement.

"What does this mean?" Robertson asked of Isaac Thomas.

"I rather think they want war with us," was the shrewd conjecture of the old trader, who knew the Indians so well. "You see, no chief has been chosen since the death of Old Tassel. John Watts rules part of the tribe, and Double Head rules the other half. In a war with the whites the chiefs know that one or the other would become such a hero that the tribal chieftainship would be his."

"Then we must try again," Sevier declared. "We cannot afford to have a war."

Robertson agreed to meet the Cherokees two months later. But when the appointed date came he found it impossible to be present. Perhaps the shrewd man thought that his absence would give an opportunity for what actually occurred.

For Governor Sevier met the Indians. And at once all their opposition seemed to disappear.

"Nolichucky Jack is to have talk with us," said Double Head. "We cannot hold out against him."

For once John Watts agreed with his rival. "We cannot say no to 'Chucky Jack!"

The victory was won in a brief period. Sevier took time for a short address, in which he urged the Indians to give up what they could not use.

“ If you go to war with us, I must be the leader against you, and I do not wish to shed your blood! ” the Governor concluded.

The treaty was made at once. For five thousand dollars, and an annuity of one thousand dollars, the Cherokees consented to leave hundreds of square miles more than had been asked when the treaty was rejected.

Best of all, the Indians came to look on Sevier as their friend. How they counted on him! They knew that he would not fail them. On every occasion of need they would go to him, and never did they seek him in vain.

Before long the settlers learned that there was no danger from the savages while Nolichucky Jack lived. Instead of running for refuge to the several hundred stockaded fortresses which had been built for their protection, they learned that they could go out on the land and live without any protection but the name and fame of their Governor.

There was sorrow in Tennessee when, in 1801, it became impossible to elect Sevier for a fourth term.

“ I wish we could change the Constitution, ” Lachlan McIntosh lamented. “ When we put provision there that no one could serve as Governor more than three terms in succession we made a mistake. ”

“ No, I do not think it was a mistake, ” Sevier smiled as he spoke. “ Let me step down; I have served my time, and I want to live in quiet. ”

But after a two-year interval Nolichucky Jack was persuaded to be a candidate once more. The man who opposed him made charges against him. Andrew Jackson, whom Sevier had appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of Law and Equity, took sides against him.

But the result of the election was decisive. Sevier won by a vote of 6786 to 4923.

Some time after the inauguration Jackson and Sevier met on the street. Sevier accused Jackson of saying untrue things about him. The result was that Jackson challenged Sevier to fight a duel.

Now in those days more courage was required to refuse to fight a duel than to accept the challenge. And Sevier showed his bravery by replying to the challenger :

“ I cannot fight you in the State of Tennessee. I have some respect for the laws of the State over which I have the honor to preside, although you, as judge, seem to have none.”

The trouble between the men continued for some time. Jackson declared publicly that Sevier was a poltroon and a coward. Later he attacked the Governor on the street, but friends interfered, and the men were separated. Finally the difficulty was patched up.

At the end of his fourth term as Governor, Sevier again wished to retire. But his friends persuaded him that it was his duty to serve still longer. They elected him unanimously for two years more, and the two years after that.

When he retired he had been Governor of Tennessee for twelve years out of the first fourteen years of the State's history.

Soon after he retired to private life a friend spoke to him of the indebtedness of the State and the whole country to him.

"I am not entitled to the credit, sir; I have been merely an instrument—led and guided and guarded by the Infinite Goodness."

Honors still pursued him. From 1811 to 1815 he was a member of Congress from Tennessee. Toward the close of his term in Congress, President Monroe asked him to go to Georgia, to supervise the running of the boundary line between Georgia and the territory of the Creek Indians. He was not strong, and he much preferred not to undertake the arduous mission. But the thought that he might do something for the Indians who believed in him and trusted him led him to promise to serve.

He did not have strength to complete the work. In the midst of his labors he was taken sick, and on September 24, 1815, he died. Where he died, he was buried, and there the body remained until 1889, when it was removed to the square before the courthouse in Knoxville.

There a monument tells of the forty years of the heroic life of

NOLICHUCKY JACK, INDIAN FIGHTER.



